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ABSTRACT

In September 1981, the Research Branch of the Department of Education in Queensland, Australia was asked to carry out a brief survey of the opinions of all parents or supervisors of Preschool Correspondence (PC) children. (PC is a home based early education program for families with 4- to 5-year-old children who live in geographically isolated areas of Queensland.) Specifically, the questionnaire concerned three early education programs produced by the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC). The programs were "Playschool," a television program for preschool children; "Kindergarten," a radio program for preschool children; and "About Children," a radio program for parents of preschool children. The main purposes of the survey were to determine how much PC children and their parents used the programs and to investigate various aspects of the broadcasts, including factors possibly affecting use, opinions on the programs' enjoyability or helpfulness, and suggestions for improvement. Survey results were based on 530 responses from parents and were reported in three sections: (1) "Use of ABC Early Education Broadcasts" shows that "Playschool" was viewed by 70% of PC children 3 to 5 days per week, and not viewed at all by 11%. "Kindergarten" was viewed by 12% of PC children 3 to 5 days per week, and not viewed at all by 56%. "About Children" was viewed 3 to 5 days per week by 9% of the parents, and not viewed at all by 68%. (2) "Factors Affecting Use..." includes reported access to television sets and television reception, knowledge of programs and level of interest, and timing of broadcasts. (3) "Program Users Opinions ..." deals with the children's enjoyment of the programs and the helpfulness of "About Children" for parents. A synthesis of results with guidelines for an ongoing review concludes the document. Appended are the survey questionnaire, an analysis of comments received from respondents, and suggestions for improving ABC early education broadcasts. (RH)

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Evaluation of ABC Early Education Broadcasts
Preschool Correspondence Survey

Christopher Dean
Research Branch
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Queensland

January 1983

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* At the time of the survey, Pat Norman was Acting Co-ordinator of the State Preschool Correspondence School.

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Left: The *Kindergarten* team. Left to right: Don Spencer, Barbara Frawley, Alister Smart, Judy Bailey and George Golla.
Above Left: John Hamblin and Lorraine Bayly with a life-raft full of *Playschool* toys.
Above: Benita Collings meets some *Playschool* viewers at an Opera House concert in Sydney.

INTRODUCTION

In September 1981, the Research Branch was requested to carry out a brief survey of the opinions of all parents (or supervisors) of State Preschool Correspondence children in Queensland, concerning three early education programs produced by the Australian Broadcasting Commission. They were: *Playschool*, a television program for preschool children; *Kindergarten*, a radio program for preschool children; *About Children*, a radio program for parents of preschool children*.

Preschool Correspondence is a home-based early education program for 4- to 5-year-old children and their families living in geographically isolated areas of Queensland**. The main purposes of the survey were to determine how much Preschool Correspondence children and their parents used the three ABC early education programs and to investigate various aspects of the broadcasts. These aspects included possible factors which might affect use; opinions on the programs enjoyability or helpfulness; and suggestions for improvement.

The survey was undertaken on behalf of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Federal Childhood Development Advisory Committee at the request of one of its members, Gerald Ashby, Director of the Division of Special Education, Department of Education, Queensland. The information gained from the survey was to assist officers of the ABC Early Education Unit who produced the programs, and was to be used also by teachers of the State Preschool Correspondence School.

* In 1981, *Playschool* was broadcast on ABC Television Monday to Friday 9.00–9.30 a.m. and 4.00–4.30 p.m. (two different programs). *Kindergarten* and *About Children* were broadcast on ABC radio 2 and 3 Monday to Friday 10.35–10.50 a.m. and 10.50–11.00 a.m. respectively. (In 1982, the radio programs were broadcast 25 minutes later, commencing at 11.00 a.m.)

** In 1981, the Preschool Correspondence Program was mainly available to all children aged 4 to 5 years who would be eligible for enrolment in Year 1 in 1982 and who would be proceeding to the Primary Correspondence School (eligible to children living more than 3.2 km from a primary school or more than 1.6 km from the nearest bus route), or to Class V schools (<36 pupils).

METHOD

INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION

A brief questionnaire was developed and trialled during October 1981. The instrument was divided into two parts: Part A, in which all respondents were asked basic information concerning use; and Part B, which requested further details from those respondents who answered that they or their Preschool Correspondence child had watched or listened to one or more of the three programs during 1981 (see Appendix 1).

In early November 1981, the questionnaire was mailed to all parents who had a child enrolled in the Queensland State Preschool Correspondence School Program (N = 666 parents). In early December 1981, a follow-up letter was sent to those parents who had not returned the questionnaire. The results outlined in this report are based on a final overall response rate of 80 per cent (N = 530).

REPORTING

In January 1982, an interim report outlining the results of the survey was written and presented to both the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Federal Childhood Development Advisory Committee and the State Preschool Correspondence School. This report consisted of a basic global analysis of the structured questions in the survey.*

As well as this interim report, State Preschool Correspondence teachers were presented with personal computer printouts of the results relating to children in each of their 1981 correspondence classes. Teachers were able, therefore, to compare their own class responses with the global responses presented in the interim report.

This present paper contains a detailed analysis of the results and is the final report of the survey.

* C. Dean, *Evaluation of ABC Early Education Broadcasts – Preschool Correspondence Survey*, Interim Report, Research Branch, Department of Education, Queensland, January 1982.

RESULTS

The results of the survey are reported in three sections:

- Use of ABC early education broadcasts
- Factors affecting the use of ABC early education broadcasts
- Program users opinions of ABC early education broadcasts

In each section the responses to both the structured and open-ended questions are first of all presented in tabular form. These findings are then explained and followed, where applicable, by a summary of the comments received from parents (or supervisors) who returned the questionnaire. (Detailed analyses of the comments appear in the Appendixes). Readers should be aware that these comments are sometimes small in number and may not always be representative. It is felt, however, that their inclusion helps to put some flesh on the sometimes skeletal results presented in tables.

A summary of the results appears at the end of each of the three sections.

USE OF ABC EARLY EDUCATION BROADCASTS

In an initial question to gauge a quick estimate of use, respondents were asked whether or not they or their Preschool Correspondence children had watched or listened to any of the three ABC Early Education programs during 1981. Table 1 shows that the majority of parents and Preschool Correspondence children had watched *Playschool* at least once during 1981, and that the two radio programs *Kindergarten* and *About Children* were used to a lesser extent. The relative 'popularity' of the three programs presented in Table 1 reflects the overall situation revealed by the survey.

Table 1: Whether or not parents or their Preschool Correspondence children had used ABC early education programs during 1981*

Response on Use	Parents or Supervisors					
	Playschool		*Kindergarten*		*About Children*	
	N	Col %	N	Col %	N	Col %
Yes	470	89	231	44	168	32
No	60	11	299	56	362	68
Total	530	100	530	100	530	100

This section elaborates on the overall utilisation trends established in Table 1 and will deal with five aspects:

- Degree of use by Preschool Correspondence children
- Mode of use by Preschool Correspondence children
- Degree of use by parents or supervisors
- Mode of use by parents or supervisors
- Degree of use by respondents' other children

Degree of use by Preschool Correspondence Children

Playschool

Table 2 shows parents'(or supervisors) responses to the question, *'How often does your Preschool Correspondence child usually watch Playschool'? Playschool* was a popular program. Almost one-half of the Preschool Correspondence children apparently watched the program *every day* and a further one-quarter watched *3–4 days a week.*

* Percentages in all tables have been rounded off to the nearest whole number. Consequently, all column percentages may not add exactly to 100.

Table 2: Frequency of use of *Playschool* by Preschool Correspondence children

Frequency of Use	Preschool Correspondence Children N	Col %
Every day	241	45
3–4 days a week	132	25
1–2 days a week	36	7
About once per fortnight	14	3
Less than once per fortnight	8	2
Less than once per month	28	5
No Answer	11	2
Non-Users	60	11
Total	530	100

Since *Playschool* was broadcast twice a day during week-days, a further question was asked, *'At what time does your preschool child usually watch Playschool'?* The results presented in Table 3 show that the morning broadcast appeared to be more popular than the afternoon session. It can be seen that 72 per cent of the Correspondence children usually watched the morning program (those who watched in the *morning*, *morning and afternoon*, and *morning plus sometimes in the afternoon*). In contrast, 32 per cent were usually afternoon watchers (those who watched in the *afternoon*, *morning and afternoon*, and *afternoon plus sometimes in the morning*). It is interesting to note that one-quarter of the preschoolers usually watched *both morning and afternoon* and a further one-quarter (28 per cent) did so *sometimes.*

Table 3: Time of Day when Preschool Correspondence children watch *Playschool*

Time of Day	Preschool Correspondence Children N	Col %
Morning (9.00–9.30 a.m.)	116	22
Afternoon (4.00–4.30 p.m.)	22	4
Both morning and afternoon	133	25
Morning plus also sometimes in the afternoon	131	25
Afternoon plus also sometimes in the morning	18	3
It varies (morning or afternoon)	37	7
No Answer	13	2
Non-Users	60	11
Total	530	100

When Tables 2 and 3 are combined, there is further evidence for the two major findings on *Playschool* reported so far, namely, the preference for the morning *Playschool* broadcast, and the overall popularity of *Playschool*. Looking first at the preference for the morning broadcast, a cross tabulation of Tables 2 and 3 shows that 87 per cent of those preschoolers who watched *Playschool every day* or *3–4 days a week* usually watched the morning broadcast, while only 38 per cent usually watched in the afternoon. The morning broadcast was therefore not only preferred overall by Preschool Correspondence children, but more importantly, by those preschoolers who watched *Playschool* very frequently.

With respect to further evidence on the second aspect, the popularity of *Playschool*, it was found that 66 per cent of those preschoolers who watched *every day* or *3–4 days a week* sometimes doubled up to watch the program twice a day. Indeed, 32 per cent of these preschoolers *usually* tuned in both in the morning and afternoon.

From the above results then, it may be concluded that *Playschool* was a very popular program with Preschool Correspondence children, especially the morning broadcast.

Comments summary

In order to add detail to the above information (which was gained from the structured questions in the survey), respondents whose Preschool Correspondence children had watched *Playschool* were invited to comment on their answers. Comments were received from approximately one-quarter of these respondents (N = 114) and a summary follows. (Further details may be found in Appendix 2.1.)

An analysis of the comments reveal two interesting points. First, many comments tend to reinforce the high use results for *Playschool* by elaborating upon the positive manner in which preschoolers reacted to the program. For example, 'Michelle would not miss it for the world and wants to know why it is not on during the week-end'.

Second, for many infrequent viewers of *Playschool*, the lack of access to television and the poor quality of reception appeared to be an important factor affecting use. For example, 'Our TV is so snowy that the children can't see'. Comments such as this are not surprising. The large distances of many Correspondence families from a population centre (and its accompanying television facilities) ensure that lack of access and poor reception will be a problem. While this is so, these comments do stimulate the thought that with the absence of such inhibiting influences, *Playschool* may have proved to be even more popular with Preschool Correspondence children.

Kindergarten

Table 4 shows parents'(or supervisors) responses to the question, *'How often does your Preschool Correspondence child usually listen to Kindergarten'?* As can be seen, *Kindergarten* was certainly not as popular as *Playschool*, but was by no means a completely neglected production. Almost one-quarter of Preschool Correspondence children apparently listened at least one day a week.

Table 4: Frequency of use of *Kindergarten* by Preschool Correspondence children

Frequency of Use	Preschool Correspondence Children N	Col %
Every day	23	4
3–4 days a week	40	8
1–2 days a week	56	11
About once per fortnight	25	5
Less than once per fortnight	17	3
Less than once per month	53	10
No Answer	17	3
Non-Users	299	56
Total	530	100

Comments summary

Comments were received from approximately one-quarter of respondents (N = 62) whose Preschool Correspondence children listened to *Kindergarten* (a full analysis is presented in Appendix 2.2). These comments reveal two points which help to explain the results presented in Table 4. First, the comments make clear that *Kindergarten* was not a listening *must* for many Preschool Correspondence children. They either lacked interest in the program or wished to be involved in other activities during the time of the broadcast. For example, 'Preschooler is an "outside" boy and is helping on the farm'. The second point to note is the apparent dependence of some preschoolers on parents for access to *Kindergarten*. If parents forgot to turn the radio on, or were too busy with another activity, many preschoolers did not listen to the program. No similar problem appeared to exist for *Playschool*. This point will be discussed further in later sections.

Mode of use by Preschool Correspondence Children

As well as looking at the degree of use of the two preschool programs, it was of interest to examine the *manner* in which Preschool Correspondence children used *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*. This aspect is treated by first looking at how well preschoolers attended to *Kindergarten* and *Playschool* and then by examining how frequently they participated with the presenters of the programs.

Program Attention Span

Table 5 shows parents' or supervisors' responses to the question, *'How long does any one program hold your preschool child's attention'?* As can be seen, *Playschool* fared very well as

an attention retainer, with *Kindergarten* being less successful. Nearly all of *Playschool's* preschool viewers usually watched *all of the program* compared with about one half of *Kindergarten* listeners who did likewise.

Table 5: How long any one program usually holds the attention of Preschool Correspondence children

Attention Duration	Preschool Correspondence children who use ABC early education programs			
	Playschool		*Kindergarten*	
	N	Col %	N	Col %
All of the program	421	90	111	48
About three-quarters	28	6	50	22
About one-half	9	2	32	14
About one-quarter	1	0	8	3
Less than one-quarter	1	0	6	3
No Answer	10	2	24	10
Total	470	100	231	100

Comments summary

Comments concerning attention span were received from about 13 per cent (N = 59) of respondents whose Preschool Correspondence children had watched *Playschool* and from 12 per cent (N = 28) of respondents whose Preschool Correspondence children had listened to *Kindergarten*. (A full analysis may be found in Appendix 2.3.)

The major point that may be noted from the comments is the difference in attitudes towards *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*. On the one hand, the most frequently expressed comments on *Playschool* were most positive and reflected the results presented in Table 5. For example: 'Joanne loves *Playschool* and is upset if she has to miss it'. On the other hand, the most frequent comments on *Kindergarten* tended to be explanations about why the preschooler did not usually listen to *all of the program*. For example: 'With radio, she tends to find it hard to relate to a voice'.

Degree of Participation

Respondents were also asked to estimate how often their preschoolers joined in when asked by presenters (e.g. singing along, doing the actions etc.). The results of this inquiry, presented in Table 6, show that approximately two-thirds of preschool *Playschool* viewers and two-fifths of preschool *Kindergarten* listeners joined in either *often* or *always*.

Table 6: How often Preschool Correspondence children join in when asked to by the presenters (singing along, doing the actions etc.)

Participation Frequency	Preschool Correspondence children who use ABC early education programs			
	Playschool N	Col %	*Kindergarten* N	Col %
Always	91	19	20	9
Often	200	43	74	32
Sometimes	132	28	74	32
Rarely	23	5	25	11
Never	9	2	12	5
No Answer	15	3	26	11
Total	470	100	231	100

When the above table is compared with Table 5 on attention span, one notable observation is that while *Playschool* scores very well as an attention retainer, there appears to be less success with the *joining in* aspect. A similar result is evident with *Kindergarten*, although the difference is not as great. Overall, it may be concluded that for both programs, participation with presenters was certainly not a mandatory exercise for many preschoolers.

Comments summary

Comments were received from 8 per cent (N = 37) of respondents whose preschool children had watched *Playschool* and from 6 per cent (N = 15) of respondents whose preschoolers had listened to *Kindergarten*. Although few in number, they help to describe the nature of participation of at least some preschoolers. There were comments describing the types of participation undertaken (singing songs etc.) but the most frequent comments for both series centred on how irregular participators displayed a certain reluctance, inhibition or passivity about joining in with the presenters when asked to do so. For example, one comment read, 'He is satisfied just to sit and listen'. Comments such as this explain in part, the overall results presented in Table 6. (A full analysis may be found in Appendix 2.4.)

Degree of use by Parents or Supervisors

Table 7 shows parents' or supervisors' responses to the question, *'How often do you watch Playschool or listen to Kindergarten and About Children'? Playschool* remained the highest rater with over one-quarter of the total number of respondents (28 per cent) watching the program *every day* or *3–4 days a week*. In comparison, *Kindergarten* rated 10 per cent in the same categories and *About Children* 9 per cent.

Table 7: Frequency of use of *Playschool*, *Kindergarten* and *About Children* by parents or supervisors

Frequency of Use	Parents or Supervisors					
	Playschool		*Kindergarten*		*About Children*	
	N	Col %	N	Col %	N	Col %
Every day	69	13	15	3	14	3
3–4 days a week	82	15	36	7	30	6
1–2 days a week	130	25	66	12	50	9
About once per fortnight	49	9	20	4	16	3
Less than once per fortnight	18	3	12	2	8	2
Less than once per month	62	12	48	9	33	6
No Answer	60	11	34	6	17	3
Non-Users	60	11	299	56	362	68
Total	530	100	530	100	530	100

The results presented in Table 7 become more interesting when they are compared with the findings for Preschool Correspondence children. Such a comparison reveals something of the nature of the parents' role with respect to *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*.

Looking at the *Playschool* results first, a comparison of Table 7 with Table 2 shows that, overall, parents watched *Playschool* far less frequently than preschoolers. For example, 28 per cent of parents watched *Playschool* at least *3–4 days a week*, compared to 70 per cent of Preschool Correspondence children. Further analysis shows that preschoolers tended to watch *Playschool* very frequently regardless of how frequently their parents watched. By way of illustration, a cross tabulation of Tables 7 and 2 shows that while most parents who watched *Playschool* frequently also had a preschool child who watched frequently, only about three-tenths (29 per cent) of those parents who watched frequently (once a fortnight or less) had a preschooler who did likewise. The remaining seven-tenths of these parents had a Preschool Correspondence child who watched far more often. From these results, then, it may be concluded that preschoolers' high use of *Playschool* tended to be unrelated to their parent's use (or lack of use) of the program. (The comments summary will reinforce this notion.)

A different pattern emerges with the radio program *Kindergarten*. When the *Kindergarten* results in Tables 4 and 7 are compared, it can be seen that, overall, parents tended to listen to *Kindergarten* with the same frequency as preschoolers. For example, 10 per cent of parents listened to *Kindergarten* at least *3–4 days a week* compared with an almost identical 12 per cent of Preschool Correspondence children. As well as this *overall* similarity, parents and preschoolers in the same household tended to listen with the same frequency. By way of illustration, a cross tabulation of Tables 4 and 5 shows that most parents (80 per cent) who listened to *Kindergarten at least 3–4 days a week* had a preschooler who listened with the same frequency. More importantly, most parents (84 per cent) who listened once a fortnight

or less had a preschooler who listened likewise. From these results, then, it may be concluded that preschoolers low *Kindergarten* listening pattern tended to be highly related to their parents use of the program. This finding is interesting in the light of earlier comments (see Comments summary, page 7) that some children appeared to be dependent on their parents for switching the program on. Could it be that Preschool Correspondence children tend to listen to *Kindergarten* only when their parents (or supervisors) tune in? It's difficult to make any conclusion on this evidence alone. If the answer is yes, however, the prospects for increased preschooler use of *Kindergarten* may be limited. The comments reported in the next section tend to highlight this problem.

Comments summary

Respondents who had used the programs were invited to comment on their response. This invitation was accepted by 25 per cent (N = 118) of *Playschool* viewers, 15 per cent (N = 35) of *Kindergarten* listeners, and 20 per cent (N = 35) of *About Children* listeners. The comments (detailed in Appendixes 2.5 and 2.6) outline to some degree the nature of parental use and are summarised here.

First, the most frequent comments on the two radio shows give a good idea of the lack of prominence given to the show by many parents (or supervisors). Less frequent listeners answered that they were either too busy or occupied with other concerns. Alternatively, they did not have the interest to listen. For example: 'It is a matter of remembering', and 'We have School of the Air when *Kindergarten* and *About Children* are on'.

Second, the most frequent comments on *Playschool* show that the viewing of this program tended to be a background activity to the other home duties performed by parents. For example, one comment read: 'I don't sit down and watch it. I'm usually working somewhere in the area of the TV'. Comments such as this don't negate the *Playschool* results presented in Table 7, but they certainly place them in a much more realistic context. The next section provides further details on the manner in which parents use early education programs.

Mode of use by Parents or Supervisors

Table 8 shows parents' or supervisors' responses to the question, *'On the times that you watch Playschool or listen to Kindergarten, how often do you join in with your preschool child (e.g. singing along, doing the actions, etc.)'?* It can be seen that parent participation was not high. For example, on the occasions that they used the programs, a minority 38 per cent of *Playschool* viewers and 35 per cent of *Kindergarten* listeners joined in either *often* or *always*.

Table 8: How often parents or supervisors join in with their Preschool Correspondence children

Participation Frequency	Parents or supervisors who use ABC early education programs			
	Playschool		*Kindergarten*	
	N	Col %	N	Col %
Always	44	9	21	9
Often	135	29	59	26
Sometimes	198	42	90	39
Rarely	53	11	21	9
Never	13	3	8	3
No Answer	27	6	32	14
Total	470	100	231	100

Comments summary

Comments on parental participation were received from 6 per cent (N = 30) of *Playschool* viewers and 7 per cent (N = 17) of *Kindergarten* listeners. The comments (presented in detail in Appendix 2.7) are mainly interesting for the differing ways in which parents became (or did not become) involved. There were some parents who were self-motivated to encourage their child's participation and other parents who were encouraged by their child. Some parents did not participate because of their involvement in other activities and a few parents, interestingly enough, had been discouraged by their preschooler who didn't want them joining in.

Use by Respondents' other Children

Whereas most of the survey centred upon parents and Preschool Correspondence children, several questions were asked to determine other children's use of the broadcasts. Tables 9 and 10 provide a context for this examination, by looking at family demographic patterns. Table 9 shows the number of other children in each family. It can be seen that most Preschool Correspondence children had at least one other brother or sister in the family. Indeed approximately one-half of them had at least two other siblings.

Table 9: Number of other children in family besides Preschool Correspondence child

Number of other children in each family	Parents (or supervisors) N	Col %
0	41	8
1	215	41
2	171	32
3	67	13
>3	34	6
No Answer	2	0
Total	530	100

Table 10 illustrates the predominant age patterns of the children in Preschool Correspondence families, and accounts for about two-thirds of respondents' families. The Table reveals a relatively young family structure and therefore an accompanying high potential for the use of ABC early education broadcasts. The Table also explains to some degree why many respondents in the previous section commented that they were able to give only limited or divided attention to the broadcasts. It is to be expected that raising young children (with others in the family also on Correspondence programs) would be very time consuming, apart from the other duties that also have to be performed.

Table 10: Predominant family patterns* (accounting for two-thirds of total respondents)

Predominant family patterns for parents (or supervisors) with . . .	Parents (or supervisors) N	% (N = 530)
. . . one other child in family:		
• another pre-primary age child	120	23
• a child in primary school Years 1 or 2	56	11
• a child in primary school Years 3 or 4	25	5
• a child in Year 5 or above	14	3
. . . two other children in family:		
• another pre-primary age child plus a child in primary Years 1 or 2	47	9
• two other pre-primary age children	39	7
• another pre-primary age child plus a child in primary school Years 3 or 4	22	4
• a child in primary school Years 3 or 4 plus a child in Year 5 or above	16	3
Total	339	64

* A predominant family pattern has been defined arbitrarily as that which accounts for at least 14 respondents.

Within the context of the above information, the use of ABC early education programs by respondents' other children may be examined. Table 11 reports the total number of other children in each age group and the proportion who are *reasonably regular* users of the two early education programs designed for children. It can be observed that there was widespread viewing of *Playschool* by children other than those enrolled in the Preschool Correspondence program. Interesting is the high percentage of primary-age children up to Year 4, who watched the program. Use of *Kindergarten* was much less but this is consistent with the ratings reported in previous sections of this report. The Table also confirms the high proportion of young children in the respondents' families.

Table 11: Use of the ABC early education programs by other children in family besides Preschool Correspondence children

Type of Child	Total Number of children of each type		Number and Percentage of each *child type* who were *reasonably regular* . . .			
			Playschool viewers		*Kindergarten* listeners	
	N	Col %	N	%	N	%
Pre-primary school age children (not including Preschool Correspondence children)	389	42	224	58	70	18
Children in primary school, Years 1–2	191	21	105	55	11	6
Children in primary school, Years 3–4	137	15	61	45	3	2
Children in Year 5 and above	207	22	55	27	0	0
Total	924*	100	–	–	–	–

* Calculated from the answers of 528 respondents. Two respondents did not answer the question.

Summary

In summarising the results presented in this section, each program will be treated separately.

Playschool

An examination of the results shows that *Playschool* had secured a regular place in the lives of most Preschool Correspondence children. In terms of overall use, *Playschool* was certainly a very popular program. The following points elucidate this conclusion:

(i) Although viewing habits sometimes varied, the vast majority of Preschool Correspondence children (70 per cent) tuned into *Playschool* at least *3–4 days a week*. Almost one-half (45 per cent) apparently watched *each day*. These statistics were reinforced by the many comments received from parents on how their preschoolers had reacted very positively to the program.

(ii) On the days they tuned into the program, one-quarter of children (25 per cent) on the Preschool Correspondence program had usually watched *Playschool* both in the *morning* and *afternoon*. (Most of these preschoolers were also very frequent viewers, that is, watched at least *3–4 days a week*). Another one-quarter (28 per cent) of Preschool Correspondence children (also very frequent viewers) 'doubled up' *sometimes* to watch the two daily broadcasts. (Overall, the morning session was used about twice as much as the afternoon session)

(iii) Although preschoolers' involvement in *Playschool* varied from time to time, any one program usually held the attention of most preschool viewers (90 per cent) for *all of the program*. This finding was reinforced by the comments from some respondents who spoke of their preschoolers' devotion to the program.

(iv) Approximately two-thirds of preschool viewers (62 per cent) joined in either *often* or *always* when asked to by the *Playschool* presenters. (Comments on this topic revealed that many preschoolers who didn't join in were reluctant, inhibited or content to be just passive viewers)

As well as revealing the high use of *Playschool* by Preschool Correspondence children, the survey showed that *Playschool* was widely used by *other children* in the preschooler's family. Indeed, it may be concluded that many Preschool Correspondence children undoubtedly watched *Playschool* with their younger or older siblings. Such a statement is exemplified by the following points:

(i) Over one-half (57 per cent) of all other children up to the primary school Year 2 level were *reasonably regular* viewers of *Playschool*.

(ii) Almost one-half (45 per cent) of children in primary school Years 3 or 4, and one quarter (27 per cent) of children in Year 5 and above, were also *reasonably regular* watchers.

The questionnaire also revealed the nature of the use of *Playschool* by parents (or supervisors). On the one hand, there were those parents who watched the program and joined in frequently with their preschool child. On the other hand, there were many occasions in which *Playschool* was viewed by preschoolers without the direct presence or participation of parents. In many respects, parents' use was not a critical issue in preschoolers' use of *Playschool*. These comments are exemplified by the following points:

(i) Although viewing habits varied, approximately one-quarter (28 per cent) of parents answered that they had watched the program at least *3–4 days a week* (compared to 70 per cent of Preschool Correspondence children). Many comments indicated that the viewing of the program was more a background activity for parents than one of total concentration.

(ii) On the occasions that they viewed the program, one-third (38 per cent) of parents joined in with their Preschool Correspondence children either *often* or *always* (compared to two-thirds, 62 per cent, of preschoolers who joined in *often* or *always*). Comments reinforced these results by showing how some parents encouraged their children to participate while other parents were either too busy or involved in other activities.

Kindergarten

An examination of the results show that *Kindergarten* has a regular place in the lives of a minority of Preschool Correspondence children. Overall *Kindergarten* was certainly a far less popular program than *Playschool*. The following points elucidate this conclusion:

(i) Although listening habits sometimes varied, about one-tenth (12 per cent) of Preschool Correspondence children tuned into *Kindergarten* at least *3–4 days a week* (compared to seven-tenths, 70 per cent, for *Playschool*), and four per cent tuned in *every day* (compared to 45 per cent for *Playschool*). Comments received from many parents indicated that their preschooler either lacked interest in the program or wished to be involved in other activities during the time of the broadcast.

(ii) Although the program attention span varied from time to time, any one program usually held the attention of about one-half (48 per cent) of preschool listeners for *all of the program* (compared to 90 per cent for *Playschool*). Comments revealed how preschoolers had responded to the radio program far less positively than to the television program.

(iii) Approximately two-fifths (41 per cent) of those preschoolers who listened to *Kindergarten*, joined in either *often* or *always* when asked to by the presenters (compared to two-thirds, 62 per cent, for *Playschool*). Similar to *Playschool*, comments on this topic revealed that many preschoolers who didn't join in were reluctant, inhibited or just content to listen passively.

Turning now to the use of *Kindergarten* by parents' *other children*, the survey showed that *Kindergarten* had been used by these children but certainly not as widely as *Playschool*. Indeed the non-target audience was relatively small. Such a statement is exemplified by the following points:

(i) Approximately one-seventh (14 per cent) of all other children up to Year 2 level were *reasonably regular* listeners of *Kindergarten* (compared to over one-half, 57 per cent, for *Playschool*).

(ii) Only 2 per cent of children in primary school Years 3–4 were *reasonably regular Kindergarten* listeners (compared to nearly one-half, 45 per cent, in this age group for *Playschool*). There were no children in Year 5 and above who were *reasonably regular* listeners (compared to about one-quarter, 27 per cent, in this age group for *Playschool*).

The questionnaire also revealed the nature of the role of parents in the use of *Kindergarten*. Similar to *Playschool* there was only a minority of parents who used *Kindergarten* frequently (in even less numbers than *Playschool*). Unlike *Playschool*, preschoolers appeared to have a listening pattern similar to their parents. There was also evidence that they could be dependent on parents for their use of *Kindergarten*. These statements become clearer by reference to the following points:

(i) Parents were not frequent listeners to *Kindergarten*. Ten per cent of parents listened to *Kindergarten* at least *3–4 days a week* (compared to 28 per cent for *Playschool*). Comments from parents indicated the lack of prominence given to the program.

(ii) Parents were not frequent participators in the program. On the occasions that they listened to *Kindergarten*, only a minority – one-third – (35 per cent) joined in either *often* or *always* with their preschool child. (Interestingly, this relatively low rating compared favourably with the *Playschool* figures of 38 per cent).

(iii) While *Kindergarten* was not used regularly, parents and preschoolers in the same family tended to listen to *Kindergarten* with the same frequency. For example, most parents (80 per cent) who listened to *Kindergarten* at least *3–4 days a week* had a preschooler who listened with the same frequency. Also, 83 per cent of parents who listened once a fortnight or less had a preschooler who did likewise. Although a similar listening pattern does not in itself establish preschoolers' dependency on parents for listening to *Kindergarten*, it is interesting to note that many of the comments received from parents tended to lend themselves to this conclusion.

About Children

An examination of the findings show that parents involved in the survey were probably an ideal potential audience for the radio program, *About Children*, because of the number and age of the children in the family. Despite this situation, *About Children*, a program designed for parents of young children, was the least used of the three ABC early education productions. The following points elaborate on this statement:

(i) Parents involved in the survey were raising relatively young families. Most parents (92 per cent) had at least one other child besides the Preschool Correspondence child. About two-fifths (42 per cent) of the total number of other children were pre-primary school age and a further one-fifth (21 per cent) were children in primary school Years 1–2.

(ii) Although listening habits varied according to prevailing circumstances, only about one-third (32 per cent) had tuned into the program during 1981. Nine per cent of parents had listened at least *3–4 days a week* and only three per cent tuned in *every day*. Comments received from parents indicated that they were either too busy or lacked interest in the program to listen more frequently.

The above summary on the use of the three programs has presented the results without attempting, in any great detail, to look at reasons behind the statistics. The next section of the report addresses this imbalance and investigates *directly* some of the factors affecting the use of the three ABC early education broadcasts.

FACTORS AFFECTING USE OF ABC EARLY EDUCATION BROADCASTS

The preceding part of the Report showed the varying degrees to which the three ABC early education broadcasts were used. This section attempts to look at factors which contributed to both the infrequent use and non-use of the programs. As has been noted, many of the comments received from parents indicate the causes of infrequent use. These aspects will arise again in this section. However, the initial stimulus for the discussion centres on an examination of the reasons for total non-use.

It will be recalled from the previous section that there were 11 per cent of respondents who answered that they or their Preschool Correspondence children had not watched *Playschool* at all during 1981 (N = 60). Similarly, there were 56 per cent who had not listened to *Kindergarten* (N = 299) and 68 per cent who had not utilised *About Children* (N = 362). These respondents were asked the reason why the various programs had not been used. The reasons are displayed in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Reasons why the 'no' respondents had not watched or listened to each program

Reason for Non-Use*	No Respondents					
	Playschool		*Kindergarten*		*About Children*	
	N	% of Responses (N = 60)	N	% of Responses (N = 299)	N	% of Responses (N = 362)
We don't have access to a set	45	75	12	4	12	3
We can't receive the ABC station	6	10	7	2	2	1
We didn't know about the program	4	7	177	59	271	75
Reception problems (interference, power problems etc.)	–	–	7	2	11	3
No time – busy doing other things	2	3	19	6	17	5
Child not interested	1	2	18	6	6	2
Respondent not interested	1	2	5	2	3	1
Seldom listen to radio	–	–	12	4	6	2
Prefers TV	–	–	1	0	1	0
Other programs are enough	–	–	8	3	1	0
Listens to commercial radio at that time	–	–	–	–	2	1
Never remembers	–	–	2	1	–	–
Radio is in bedroom	–	–	1	0	–	–
Unsuitable time	–	–	5	2	3	1
No Answer	1	2	25	8	27	7
Total	60	100	299	100	362	100

* The first three categories were pre-coded in the structured question (Q2). The remaining categories were post-coded from specific details supplied by respondents.

The results of Table 12 highlight the need to consider the following aspects affecting use: access and reception; knowledge of programs; interest in programs; outside activities affecting use; suitability of broadcast times.

Access and Reception

Table 12 shows that the reason expressed by most (85 per cent) of the 60 respondents who had not watched *Playschool* during 1981, was either the lack of access to a set or the inability to receive the ABC station. In comparison, access and reception didn't appear to be the overwhelming problem for *Kindergarten* and *About Children* non-users. Only a small minority of these respondents had similar difficulties.

The finding that access and reception difficulties was the predominant reason for non-use of *Playschool* is interesting in view of similar comments received from some respondents who had watched *Playschool* during 1981 but only infrequently (see previous section). Indeed, it may be concluded that, for both non-users and infrequent users, problems with access and reception was an important issue.

While this is so, it should not be forgotten that *Playschool* still enjoyed a high degree of use overall. As mentioned above, only 11 per cent of respondents had not watched *Playschool* at all during 1981. This minority figure should by no means be disregarded, but the important issue is that for most of these non-users, problems with access and reception meant that there had been no real choice as to whether or not they watched *Playschool* during the year. With the existence of a choice, perhaps the ratings for *Playschool* may have been even higher.

Knowledge of Programs

Whereas access and reception difficulties appeared to be the major reason for the non-use of *Playschool*, Table 12 shows that the major stumbling block for the two radio shows, *Kindergarten* and *About Children*, was lack of knowledge of the programs. Fifty-nine per cent of the 299 non-users of *Kindergarten* and 75 per cent of the 362 non-users of *About Children* apparently didn't even know about the programs.

This finding is one of the most startling of the survey, for if we look at the overall figures, one third (33 per cent) of the total number of survey respondents answered that they didn't know about *Kindergarten* and an even larger one half (51 per cent) weren't aware of the existence of *About Children*. In comparison, only 1 per cent had not heard of *Playschool*.

Why should *Playschool* be far better known than the radio programs? Intuitively, it is to be expected that television has a more pervading influence than radio on the lives of most people, with the result that they have a greater knowledge of television offerings. However, the survey also points to fundamentally different ways in which users came to know about programs in the two mediums. It is worthwhile to look at this aspect. Table 13 shows how those respondents, who used the two major early education broadcasts, actually came to know about the programs.

Table 13: How users came to know about *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*

Origin of Knowledge About Programs*	Parents or Supervisors who use ABC early education programs			
	Playschool		*Kindergarten*	
	N	Col %	N	Col %
I saw it in the program guide	261	56	41	18
A friend told me about it	73	16	29	13
The Preschool Correspondence School told me about it	2	0	12	5
Known about it since a child	15	3	43	19
Known about it for a long time (ever since I can remember)	22	5	13	6
Just happened to hear/watch it one day	24	5	51	22
My other children watched/listened to it when small	15	3	2	1
Relations informed me	11	2	2	1
Regular ABC listeners/viewers	1	0	6	3
Preschool child found it	3	1	–	–
Previously a teacher	5	1	1	0
Can't remember	4	1	1	0
It follows Sesame Street	5	1	–	–
Saw it advertised on TV	1	0	–	–
No Answer	28	6	30	13
Total	470	100	231	100

* The first three categories were pre-coded in the structured question (C9). The remaining categories were post-coded from specific details supplied by respondents.

As can be seen, a high percentage (56 per cent) of *Playschool* watchers came to know about the program by seeing it in a program guide. In comparison, a program guide appeared to be less important for the radio program. Indeed, the *Kindergarten* data shows that there was apparently no predominant source that made respondents aware of the radio program. Instead of one predominant systematic awareness procedure such as a program guide, there were several scattered sources which could best be described as unsystematic or accidental. The most frequent of these sources were: *just happened to hear it* (22 per cent), *known about it since a child* (19 per cent), and *a friend told me about it* (13 per cent).

Such an unsystematic method of becoming aware of the radio program may explain why so many respondents did not know about it. This tentative explanation is perhaps reinforced by a cross tabulation of relevant data that shows approximately two-thirds of those respondents who answered they didn't know about *Kindergarten* had actually learnt about *Playschool* by seeing it in a program guide.

This is not to suggest that consulting a radio guide is necessarily a realistic answer to the lack of knowledge of early education radio broadcasts. Indeed, it is probably wise to conclude (as the survey suggests) that only a minority of listeners will ever consult a radio program to select their listening pleasure (perhaps only ardent radiophiles). For the majority of listeners, knowledge of radio programs is probably obtained through other sources. Alternatively,

knowledge of radio programs may even be regarded as unimportant because most radio programming in Australia (especially commercial stations) tends to encourage its use as background accompaniment to the daily routine.

The findings of the survey do suggest, however, that there is a need for some systematic form of awareness campaign if the use of ABC early education radio broadcasts are to be used more frequently. While it is correct to say that knowledge of a program is not necessarily a guarantee of its use, certainly it would appear to be a prerequisite.

Interest in Programs

As well as factors relating to difficulties with access and reception, and lack of knowledge of programs, Table 12 indicates other reasons why respective respondents didn't use the early education programs, or why they used them irregularly. These reasons are concerned with the area of motivation and interest and apply mainly to *Kindergarten* and *About Children*.

The following reasons outlined in Table 12 are subsumed into the category of motivation and interest: *child not interested*, *respondent not interested*, *seldom listens to radio*, *other programs are enough*, *never remembers*, *prefers TV*, and *listens to commercial radio at that time*. An examination of the Table shows that approximately 16 per cent of *Kindergarten* non-users and 6 per cent of *About Children* non-users gave one of these reasons.

This finding is interesting in view of comments received from those who had listened to the radio programs (albeit infrequently). It will be recalled, that some of the comments centred upon the lack of interest or motivation of parents or Preschool Correspondence children in listening to the programs. This was not the case for *Playschool*. It may be concluded that for both non-users and infrequent users, lack of sufficient interest was a notable minority reason for under-utilisation of *Kindergarten* and *About Children*.

Other Activities affecting Use

Another minority reason for the non-use of the two radio programs also appears in Table 12: *no time – busy doing other things*. Six per cent of *Kindergarten* non-users and 5 per cent of *About Children* non-users gave this as their reason. A similar reason was also expressed in some of the comments received from parents (or supervisors) who had listened to the programs, but infrequently.

Timing of Broadcasts

One of the most important factors which could affect the use of television and radio programs is the timing of broadcasts. In keeping with previous subsections, this aspect is investigated by looking at the opinions of both users and non-users of the early education broadcasts.

Table 12 shows that the broadcast time was not an important reason for respondents not having watched or listened during 1981. Inappropriate broadcast time was the reason expressed by only 2 per cent of *Kindergarten* non-users, 1 per cent of *About Children* non-users and none of the *Playschool* non-users. In interpreting the results for *Kindergarten* and *About*

Children, however, it is important to keep in mind that the majority of respondents didn't even know about the programs. Since this is so, it is not possible to state whether or not the broadcast time would have been a critical factor in the event of knowledge of the programs existence.

What about the opinions of those respondents who did watch or listen during 1981? Table 14 shows the response to the question *'How suitable are the broadcast times of the program?'*. A majority of respondents felt that the broadcast time was *about right*, with the *Playschool* broadcast time tending to be more suitable than the two radio programs.

Table 14: Opinions of users concerning suitability of broadcast times

Suitability of broadcast time	Parents or supervisors who use ABC early education programs					
	Playschool		*Kindergarten*		*About Children*	
	N	Col %	N	Col %	N	Col %
The broadcast time is about right	432	92	168	73	116	69
The broadcast time is unsuitable	19	4	51	22	26	15
No Answer	19	4	12	5	26	15
Total	470	100	231	100	168	100

While Table 14 shows that the broadcast time is not an issue for the majority of users, there is still a notable minority of *Kindergarten* and *About Children* users who found the broadcast time to be *unsuitable*. It is interesting to note (from a suitable cross-table) that these respondents tended to use the programs less frequently than those who found the broadcast time *about right*. For example, about two-thirds of *Kindergarten* listeners who found the broadcast time unsuitable tuned in either *less than once a fortnight* or *less than once a month*, compared to one-fifth of *about right* listeners. It is quite possible that the unsuitable time caused this difference in utilisation.

Respondents who answered that they had found the broadcast time *unsuitable* were asked what would be their preferred time. There was no consensus, with preferred times ranging from 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. The results are presented below:

- Thirty-one respondents (including several who had not answered the question about suitability) gave a preferred time for *Playschool*, with the mode being 10.00 a.m. (the preferred time of 5 respondents).
- Forty-nine respondents gave a preferred time for *Kindergarten*, with the mode being 9.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. (both the preferred time of 9 respondents each).
- Eighteen respondents gave a preferred time for *About Children*, with the mode being 8.30 a.m., 10.00 a.m., and 10.30 a.m. (the preferred time of 2 respondents each).

Summary

In summarising the factors affecting use, the television and radio programs are treated separately.

Playschool

The survey revealed that the major factor affecting the use of *Playschool* was the lack of access to the television program. This aspect had affected both non-users and infrequent users of *Playschool*. Meanwhile, the broadcast times of the program did not appear to be an important factor affecting use. The following points elucidate these statements:

(i) Lack of access to *Playschool* was the reason expressed by most respondents (85 per cent) who had not used *Playschool* during 1981. The situation was caused by either lack of access to a set or the inability to receive the ABC station. (Both of these aspects are interrelated). Comments received from infrequent *Playschool* viewers cited similar factors which affected their use of the program.

(ii) Only a small minority (4 per cent) of *Playschool* users had found the *Playschool* broadcast time to be unsuitable and no non-users cited this aspect.

Kindergarten* and *About Children

The survey revealed four important factors affecting the use of the two radio programs. The major factor for non-users was the lack of knowledge of the programs. Two less important factors (affecting both infrequent users and non-users) were the lack of interest and lack of available time. A fourth and final factor (affecting a minority of users) was the broadcast time of the programs. The following points elaborate on this summary:

(i) One-third (33 per cent) of the total number of survey respondents indicated that they didn't know about *Kindergarten* and one-half (51 per cent) weren't aware of the existence of *About Children*.

(ii) Lack of interest or lack of available time were the reasons expressed by one-quarter (22 per cent) of *Kindergarten* non-users and one-tenth (11 per cent) of *About Children* non-users. Similar reasons were expressed in the comments from some respondents who were infrequent listeners.

(iii) Approximately one-quarter (22 per cent) of parents who had listened to *Kindergarten* and one-sixth (16 per cent) of parents who had listened to *About Children*, felt that the broadcast times were unsuitable. (These parents tended to use the programs less frequently than those who found the broadcast time suitable.)

PROGRAM USERS'OPINIONS OF ABC EARLY EDUCATION BROADCASTS

As well as asking questions that attempted to obtain basic information on program use, respondents who had watched or listened to the programs during 1981 were asked their opinions to provide further details on the programs. These opinions are reported here.

Preschool Correspondence Children's Enjoyment of *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*

General Opinions

Parents or supervisors were asked, *'How much does your Preschool Correspondence child usually enjoy the program'?* The responses are reported in Table 15.

Table 15: How much State Preschool Correspondence Children usually enjoy *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*

Amount of Enjoyment	Preschool Correspondence children who use early education programs			
	Playschool N	Col %	*Kindergarten* N	Col %
Enjoys it a lot	437	93	117	51
Enjoys it a little	15	3	75	32
Doesn't really enjoy it	1	0	16	7
No Answer	17	4	23	10
Total	470	100	231	100

As can be seen, nearly all respondents (93 per cent) felt that their preschoolers enjoyed *Playschool a lot*, while approximately one-half (51 per cent) of users felt the same about *Kindergarten.* It is notable that there was substantial proportion (32 per cent) who felt that their preschoolers enjoyed *Kindergarten a little*, and a few who felt they *didn't really enjoy it* at all. Indeed, such was the difference between the two programs that all of the 16 preschoolers who apparently didn't enjoy *Kindergarten*, actually enjoyed *Playschool a lot.* Similarly most (96 per cent) of those preschoolers who enjoyed *Kindergarten a little* enjoyed *Playschool a lot.*

Comment summary

Comments on enjoyment were received from 6 per cent (N = 29) of respondents whose preschoolers had watched *Playschool* and 2 per cent (N = 5) of respondents whose preschoolers

had listened to *Kindergarten*. There were also 14 comments which compared the enjoyment of both programs. There are two notable themes to the comments (presented in detail in Appendix 2.8). First, most comments on *Playschool* were very positively oriented to the program. For example: 'She won't go anywhere while it is on'. The second theme centred upon how *Playschool* was more enjoyable than *Kindergarten*. For example, 'Just not interested in radio after taking in morning TV'.

Specific Details

As well as ascertaining opinions on the overall enjoyability of the two programs, open-ended questions were asked to find what preschoolers considered to be the most enjoyable and unenjoyable parts of *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*. Parents were first of all asked, '*What part of the program does your preschool child enjoy the most*'? Answers were received from 86 per cent (N = 404) of the respondents whose preschoolers had watched *Playschool* and 75 per cent (N = 173) of the respondents whose preschoolers listened to *Kindergarten*. Many respondents wrote down more than one enjoyable part.

The responses to this question were categorised and the results are presented in Tables 16(a) and 16(b). As can be observed, there was a high degree of commonality between *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*. Worthy of note is *the story* and *singing*. For *Playschool* watchers only, another interesting answer was *all of it*.

Table 16(a): Part of *Playschool* most enjoyed by Preschool Correspondence children

Most enjoyable part of *Playschool* (A selection of responses included)	Response from parents or supervisors who watch *Playschool* N	% (N = 404) *
• *'Stories', 'Story-telling time', 'Listening to stories'*	173	43
• *'All of it', 'The whole program', 'Everything'*	111	28
• *'Singing', 'Songs'*	77	19
• *'Actions', 'Joining in', 'Dancing', 'Games they play', 'Jumping around'*	52	13
• *'Looking at the clock', 'The clock', 'The rocket clock', 'Telling the time', 'Tick-tock'*	44	11
• *'Looking through the window', 'Window'*	34	8
• *'Making things', Building things', 'The Tidy Box', 'The Useful Box', 'Craft Work'*	31	8
• *'Looking after pets', 'Pets Day', 'If there are animals on'*	25	6
• *'When they dress-up', 'The dress-up bit'*	14	4
• *'Visits to places', 'When they go outdoors to farms, zoos'*	9	2
• *'Most of it', 'Almost all'*	7	2
• Other responses	22	6
Total Responses	599	–

Table16(b): Part of *Kindergarten* most enjoyed by Preschool Correspondence children

Most enjoyable part of *Kindergarten* (A selection of responses included)	Responses from parents or supervisors who listen to *Kindergarten* N	% (N = 173) **
• *'The story', 'Storytime', 'Stories'*	108	62
• *'Singing', 'Songs', 'Music parts'*	58	34
• *'What am I?', 'Mystery sounds', 'Words that rhyme', 'Picking the difference', 'Odd man out',* (Riddles and guessing games)	28	16
• *'Dancing', 'Moving', 'Joining in part', 'Music actions'*	11	6
Total Responses	205	–

* No answers were received from 66 *Playschool* respondents (470 – 66 = 404)
** No answers were received from 58 *Kindergarten* respondents (231 – 173 = 58)

Respondents were also asked, *'Are there any parts of the programs that your preschool child does not enjoy'? 'If so, what parts'?* Perhaps it says something positive for the program that answers were received from only 7 per cent (N = 33) of respondents whose preschoolers watched *Playschool* and from 13 per cent (N = 22) whose preschoolers listened to *Kindergarten.* Indeed, there were many parents who commented that their preschool child did not dislike any parts of the program. There was even one respondent whose dislike was most positive; 'He doesn't like it when its finished!' Many responses were idiosyncratic but the major groupings appear in Tables 17(a) and 17(b).

Table 17(a): Part of *Playschool* not enjoyed by Preschool Correspondence children

Unenjoyable parts of *Playschool* (A selection of responses included)	Responses from parents or supervisors who watch *Playschool* N	Col %
'Looking through the window' (or parts thereof)	6	18
'Storytelling', 'When story is read from book', 'Stories when read with no action'	6	18
'Play section', 'action', 'no longer interested in play section', 'dancing the action'	5	15
'Singing'	3	9
Other responses	13	39
Total Responses	33	100

Table 17(b): Part of *Kindergarten* not enjoyed by Preschool Correspondence children

Unenjoyable parts of *Kindergarten* (A selection of responses included)	Responses from parents or supervisors who listen to *Kindergarten* N	Col %
'Mystery sound', 'Odd man out', 'Who am I?' (Guessing game)	6	30
'Story', 'Gets bored with story sometimes', 'Sometimes loses interest when story is being read'	3	15
'Whenever its not clear whats happening', 'Hard to hear, loses concentration' (related to reception problems)	3	15
'Not interested', 'It can't hold his interest'	3	15
Other responses	5	25
Total Responses	20	100

Helpfulness of *About Children* for Parents and Supervisors

General Opinions

Parents or supervisors were asked, *'Does the radio program About Children help you to understand your preschool child better ?'* Table 18 reveals that for *About Children* listeners, opinions were fairly evenly divided between the program helping *a lot* and helping *a little.*

Table 18: How much *About Children* helps parents or supervisors to understand their preschool child better

Amount of Help	Parents or supervisors who listen to *About Children* N	Col %
It helps a lot	69	41
It helps a little	76	45
It doesn't help at all	7	4
No answer	16	10
Total	168	100

Comments Summary

Comments on the before-listed opinions were received from 14 per cent (N = 2) of *About Children* listeners. (Further details are presented in Appendix 2.9) The most notable point to be concluded from a majority of comments was that some parents had found the program to be informative and enjoyable, even though it had not helped them *a lot* in understanding their own preschool child better. The program could be interesting although not always relevant in the narrower practical sense. These comments may explain in part why, in further analysis, it was found that about two-fifths of frequent listeners to *About Children* (at least *3–4 days a week*) felt that the program had helped only *a little*. This point should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of Table 18.

Desired Topics

To gather feedback for producers of the program, parents and supervisors were asked *'What topics would you like to hear discussed in future programs of About Children'?* Answers were received from 54 per cent (N = 90) of respondents who had listened to the program during 1981. First and second priority topics were solicited from listeners and these were categorised into nine types. These categories are presented in Table 19 and are interesting in that a great deal of importance appears to be attached to topics which centre on educational matters or family interpersonal relationships and behaviour.

Table 19: Suggested topics for future editions of *About Children*

Suggested Topics (A selection of responses included)	Suggestions from parents or supervisors who listen to *About Children*			
	Priority 1 Suggestions N	Priority 2 Suggestions N	Total Suggestions N	Col %
• *Relationships/Behaviour* 'rivalry of children in the family', 'involving fathers with children', discipline and obedience', 'how to manage temper tantrums'	25	14	39	27
• *Educational* 'learning slowness and ways to help', 'learning to read', 'first years of school', 'helping child to learn'	21	14	35	24
• *General Child Rearing/Child Development* 'more child psychology', 'understanding your child's personality', 'influences of environment in early life affecting later life'	9	8	17	12
• *Individuals Emotional/Affective Development* 'building up kids confidence', 'separation anxiety', 'How to help child cope with fear', 'emotional development', 'how to treat a child in adult company'	10	5	15	10
• *Health* 'childhood illnesses', 'latest thinking on first aid for children', 'medical observation and basic cures', 'care of teeth'	7	4	11	7
• *Dietry* 'diet/behaviour relationships', 'how to avoid bad food children demand through peer pressure and advertising', 'poor appetites in 4 year olds', 'obesity'	5	4	9	6
• *Speech Development* 'are isolated children more likely to be slow talkers?' 'speech development stages', 'advice on improving children's speech', 'how to help a child with speech problems'	4	3	7	5
• *Play/Toys/Recreation* 'toys – selection and use', 'talking about good story books', 'how to play together with other children', 'toy suggestions and cassettes of songs'	5	3	8	5
• *Other*	4	2	6	4
Total Number of Suggestions	90	57	147	100

Suggestions for Improving ABC Early Education Broadcasts

Towards the end of the questionnaire, parents or supervisors were given the opportunity to offer suggestions for improving ABC early education programs. In response to this request, they either offered actual suggestions for improving the programs or made general comments. A few respondents also offered more than one comment or suggestion. Responses were categorised into five major divisions: positive comments; critical comments; suggestions in the program content area; suggestions to improve presentation; and suggestions to improve the service to users. For ease of reference, the three programs are treated separately:

Playschool

In response to the question, '*Do you have any suggestions for improving Playschool?*' answers were received from 36 per cent (N = 167) of parents who had watched *Playschool*. Table 20 presents a categorisation of the 171 suggestions received.

Table 20: Suggestions for improving *Playschool*

Response Categories	Response from parents or supervisors who watch *Playschool* N	Col %
Positive comments (rather than suggestions)	83	49
Critical comments (rather than suggestions)	1	1
Suggestions in the program content area	(50)	(29)
• more activities for children (e.g. craft)	13	8
• more educational content	11	6
• more on-location programs	6	4
• more about other people's lifestyles and customs	4	2
• more comedy	3	2
• more simple experiments	2	1
• more animals	2	1
• more children	2	1
• more nursery rhymes and fairy tales	1	1
• more puppets	1	1
• getting to know the right people	1	1
• less repetitious songs	1	1
• less babyish content	1	1
• less stories on witches	1	1
• less country bumpkin stereotyping	1	1
Suggestions to improve presentation	(9)	(5)
• suggestions for presenters	8	5
• more mature program style	1	1
Suggestions in the service/liaison area	(28)	(16)
• less program repeats	9	5
• a longer program (e.g. 1 hour)	8	5
• better liaison with Preschool Correspondence Program	4	2
• more supplementary publications	3	2
• produce a second preschool TV program	2	1
• separate *Sesame St.* and *Playschool* broadcasts	1	1
• don't interrupt *Playschool* with the cricket	1	1
Total Responses	171	100

As can be seen from Table 20, the most frequent responses were positive comments on the program rather than actual suggestions. Indeed, many parents indicated that they had no

suggestions for improving the programs because they felt that the programs were already satisfactory. In terms of the suggestions received, the major focus appeared to be on program content, but several other suggested improvements were canvassed as well. (For examples of the various categories in Table 20, refer to Appendix 3.1.)

Kindergarten

In response to the question, *'Do you have any suggestions for improving Kindergarten?'* answers were received from 17 per cent (N = 39) of parents who had listened to *Kindergarten*. Table 21 presents a categorisation of the 40 suggestions received.

Table 21: Suggestions for improving *Kindergarten*

Response Categories	Responses from parents or supervisors who listen to *Kindergarten* N	Col %
Positive comments (rather than suggestions)	13	33
Critical comments (rather than suggestions)	6	15
Suggestions in the program content area:	(6)	(15)
• add more action	1	3
• more real variety	1	3
• more learning stories	1	3
• keep up stories and riddles for listening training	1	3
• include follow-up suggestions	1	3
• less urban orientation	1	3
Suggestions to improve presentation	(8)	(20)
• slow down pace and style	6	15
• longer introductory music to warn you	1	3
• use children's voices for children's parts	1	3
Suggestions to improve service	(7)	(18)
• a longer program	3	8
• prepare supplementary resource package	1	3
• produce equivalent ABC TV program	1	3
• broadcast at different time	1	3
• advertise program on TV	1	3
Total Responses	40	100

As can be seen from the Table, the most frequent responses were similar to *Playschool* in that they were positive comments on the program rather than suggestions. As with *Playschool*, parents offered suggestions in three major areas. The pace and style of the program was the most notable area of contention especially in terms of the difficulty preschoolers experienced in comprehending aspects of the program. Critical comments were also in evidence. (For examples of the various categories in Table 21, please refer to Appendix 3.2.)

About Children

In response to the question, *'Do you have any suggestions for improving About Children?'* answers were received from 14 per cent (N = 23) of parents who had listened to *About Children*. Table 22 presents a categorisation of these suggestions.

Table 22: Suggestions for improving *About Children*

Response Categories	Responses from parents or supervisors who listen to *About Children* N	Col %
Positive comments (rather than suggestions)	10	43
Critical comments (rather than suggestions)	2	9
Suggestions in the program content area:	(7)	(30)
• suggested topics (included in Table 19)	4	17
• engage guests with experience (not theorists)	2	9
• monthly question and answer session	1	4
Suggestions to improve the service	(4)	(17)
• repeat program in the evening	1	4
• a longer program	1	4
• advertise the program more	2	9
Total Responses	23	100

As can be seen from Table 22, once again the most frequent responses were positive comments rather than suggestions. Several answers also centred on further suggested topics. (For examples of the various categories in Table 22, refer to Appendix 3.3.)

Additional Comments on ABC Early Education Broadcasts

As a final question, respondents who had used ABC early education programs were asked if there was anything they wished to add to what they had already recorded on the survey instrument. This question also gave parents (or supervisors) an opportunity to summarise their opinions on the programs. Comments were received from 172 parents who sometimes wrote on more than one aspect of the broadcasts. There were 206 units of information (comments) supplied in answer to this question.

Perhaps it is indicative of the overall findings of the survey that the final words of many respondents should be related especially to *Playschool*. Approximately one-half of these final comments spoke of *Playschool* as being an excellent program for preschool children. In comparison, only a minority of comments expressed appreciation of the two radio programs *Kindergarten* and *About Children*. Other comments congratulated the ABC for producing the three early education programs. Finally, there was also the minority of comments which were criticisms of various aspects affecting the utilisation of early education programs.

Summary

In summarising the opinions reported in this section, the three ABC early education programs are treated separately.

Playschool

Already it has been reported that *Playschool* was used widely by Preschool Correspondence children. It is with little surprise, then, to find that *Playschool* was enjoyed greatly by preschoolers and was thought to be an excellent program by parents. The following points elucidate this conclusion:

(i) Most (93 per cent) Preschool Correspondence children who watched *Playschool* apparently enjoyed it *a lot*. Very few preschoolers disliked any aspect of the program. Comments on this topic reinforce this finding. (Overall, the most enjoyable parts of *Playschool* appeared to be the *story* and *singing*.)

(ii) Parents were abundant in their praise of the program. About one-half of the final comments on the questionnaire were related specifically to the excellence of *Playschool*. Also, about one-half of the parents who offered suggestions for improving the program expressed their satisfaction by indicating that there was no real necessity to change the already successful format. (Those respondents who did suggest improvements centred most frequently upon aspects of program content and suggestions in the service/liaison area.)

Kindergarten

Already it has been reported that *Kindergarten* was used regularly by only a minority of Preschool Correspondence children. This result is indicative of opinions on the program held by parents and preschoolers. Opinions varied from the lukewarm reception of those who used the program irregularly, to the satisfaction expressed by the minority of regular users. The following points explain this statement:

(i) Approximately one-half (51 per cent) of preschoolers who listened to *Kindergarten* enjoyed the program a lot (compared to most preschoolers (93 per cent) for *Playschool*). Comments on this topic tended to downgrade *Kindergarten* in comparison to *Playschool* but nevertheless, only a few preschool listeners apparently disliked particular aspects of the program. (Overall, the most enjoyable parts of *Kindergarten* were similar to *Playschool* – the *story* and *singing*.)

(ii) Parents were sparing in their praise of the program. Only a minority of the final comments on the questionnaire expressed specific appreciation for *Kindergarten* (although other comments congratulated the three early education programs). Nevertheless, one-third (33 per cent) of suggestions for improving the program indicated that *Kindergarten* was good as it was. (Suggestions for improving the program centred on slowing the pace down a little, improving aspects of program content, and bettering the services to the listener.)

About Children

Already it has been reported that *About Children* was the least used of the three programs. The opinions on *About Children* reflect this finding. They were generally lukewarm, but there was a minority of appreciative listeners, as the following points reveal:

(i) Less than one-half (41 per cent) of the minority of parents who had listened to *About Children* felt that the program had helped them to understand their child *a lot* better. Some comments, however, indicated that *About Children* had been interesting and informative if not always of great help.

(ii) Appreciative comments on the program were generally sparing with only a minority praising *About Children*. While this is so, about two-fifths (43 per cent) of the small number of additional comments received were most positive. Also, about one-half (54 per cent) of those parents who listened to the program were sufficiently interested to suggest topics for future editions of the program. (The most frequently desired topics were of an educational nature or on family interpersonal relationships and behaviour.)

REPORT SUMMARY AND GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW

In the introduction of this Report, it was stated that the survey was undertaken on behalf of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Federal Childhood Development Advisory Committee. The aim of this section is to briefly summarise the results, and to offer guidelines to the Committee which may be used in their on-going review of ABC early education broadcasts.

In considering the summary, it is important of course, to remember that the survey was conducted by reference to a specific rather than a general population group – a group associated with preschool correspondence education. While it will probably be tempting (and helpful) to speculate on how general the findings of the survey might be, the interpreter should remain aware of the nature of the group which was surveyed. Of interest here are possible differences in use which might have been caused by such factors as geographical isolation and the correspondence situation.

Keeping this in mind, the summary and guidelines are presented under the following headings: Children's Use of *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*; Parents' Role in Children's Use of *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*; and Parents' Use of *About Children*.

CHILDREN'S USE OF *PLAYSCHOOL* AND *KINDERGARTEN*

Children's use of *Playschool*

On the evidence of parents or supervisors (since it was they who answered the questionnaire), *Playschool* was a very popular program with Preschool Correspondence children. The preschoolers watched *Playschool* very frequently and enjoyed it a great deal, especially the story and singing segments. The program generally held the attention of preschool viewers for all of the program and approximately two-thirds participated frequently with the *Playschool* presenters. Many parents were abundant in their praise for *Playschool* and commented on how their preschoolers had reacted very positively to the program. The results also showed that *Playschool* had been widely used by other children in the preschooler's family, especially other pre-primary and lower primary school children. Indeed *Playschool* viewing was undoubtedly a siblings affair in many homes. All in all, it may be concluded that in terms of use, *Playschool* was a most successful television program.

Guidelines for Review

While the picture painted by the findings is a rosy one, there are several aspects concerning children's use of *Playschool* which the Committee may wish to consider:

(i) There was a notable minority of preschoolers who didn't participate in the program as frequently as the program's popularity might predict. Inhibition and passivity was a problem for some of these children. This aspect stimulates consideration of the manner in which children are encouraged to join in. Three major variables for possible investigation include: the role of parents; the role of the television presenter (and producer); and the personality of the children themselves. The latter two aspects are beyond the scope of this survey, but the role of parents will be discussed later.

(ii) There are many regular features on *Playschool* including toys and pets, the window, and the clock and calendar. However, the parts most enjoyed overall by preschoolers appeared to be the more conventional ones such as the story and singing. Such a finding might influence the allocation of time and resources given to the production of various features. The many suggestions from parents on improving *Playschool* may also be of help to the Advisory Committee in their consideration of program content and the service offered to viewers in general.

(iii) The major factor affecting both infrequent users and non-users of *Playschool* appeared to be the lack of access to the television program due to the effects of geographical isolation. This issue goes beyond the direct responsibility of the Advisory Committee, but it serves to remind that access to ABC television reception is not yet available to 100 per cent of the Australian population.

Children's use of *Kindergarten*

On the evidence of parents or supervisors, the radio program *Kindergarten* has a regular place in the lives of only a minority of Preschool Correspondence children. *Kindergarten* was by no means a neglected production, but it was certainly used less frequently and not enjoyed as much as *Playschool*. *Kindergarten* also suffered comparatively in holding preschoolers' attention during the program and induced fewer of them to participate with the presenters. Parents were generally lukewarm in their praise for *Kindergarten* and although there were certainly expressions of satisfaction by some respondents, many comments centred upon their

preschooler's lack of interest in listening to the program. These results were also reflected in the comparatively small *non-target* audience of *other children.* All in all, it may be concluded that in terms of use, *Kindergarten* certainly had its regular listeners, but this pales in comparison with the highly successful television show, *Playschool.*

Guidelines for Review

In summarising the above findings on children's use of *Kindergarten*, the survey points towards aspects which the Advisory Committee may wish to consider:

(i) The major item on the agenda should be parents'and supervisors'apparent lack of knowledge of the program. This aspect is probably the most startling of the survey. If *Kindergarten* is to have the potential to be used more widely, then knowledge of the program is a necessary prerequisite. In short, some suitable form of awareness campaign is desirable.

(ii) As the summary indicates, *Kindergarten* was also generally under-used by those who knew about the program. The following areas for consideration may shed some light on this problem: the parents role in their preschooler's use of *Kindergarten* (discussed later); the nature of the radio medium (also discussed later); the unsuitability of the broadcast time for about one-quarter of listeners; and problems associated with the program itself.

On the latter aspect, one of the more interesting avenues for investigation is the rapid pace of the program. There were some preschoolers who found the program difficult to follow. The reasons for this may be related to the auditory nature of the radio medium and to the poor radio reception received in some areas. Some of the segments such as 'The Mystery Sound' may be inappropriate in these circumstances.

Apart from this aspect, there are other areas which the Committee may wish to consider that relate to the program itself. Certainly the overwhelming popularity of the *story* and *singing* should not be ignored and parents suggestions for improving the program content and the service offered to listeners in general, may also be of help.

PARENTS' ROLE IN CHILDREN'S USE OF *PLAYSCHOOL* AND *KINDERGARTEN*

In focusing on the two preschool programs *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*, the main aim was to gauge target audience use, namely that of Preschool Correspondence children. A supplementary aim, however, was to identify the parents' (or supervisors') role in influencing their preschoolers' use of the two programs. This section first of all summarises the parents' role in the two programs and then offers guidelines for any review of this role.

Playschool

The results show that only a minority of parents watched the program regularly and joined in often with their Preschool Correspondence children. There were notable exceptions, but for many parents, *Playschool* viewing tended to be an incidental activity undertaken in conjunction with housework or other work activity. Given the finding that *Playschool* was viewed widely by preschoolers, it may be concluded that the program was viewed often by preschoolers without the direct presence or participation of parents. Indeed, the parents presence did not appear to be a crucial factor in their preschoolers viewing of *Playschool.*

Kindergarten

The parents' role in their preschoolers'use of *Kindergarten* was different to that of *Playschool.* To be certain, parents were neither frequent listeners to *Kindergarten* (even less so than *Playschool*) nor did many parents join in regularly with their preschoolers. What is important, however, is that in direct contrast to *Playschool*, very few preschoolers listened to *Kindergarten* more frequently than their parents. Furthermore, the comments received from parents lead to the conclusion that at least some preschoolers were dependent to some degree, on their parents tuning into the program.

Guidelines for Review

The above summaries on the role of parents or supervisors in children's use of *Playschool* and *Kindergarten* suggest the following discussion points:

(i) The relatively low use of *Playschool* and *Kindergarten* by parents focuses attention on their intended role in early education broadcasts. Assuming that a more active role is desirable then communicating that role to parents is an important area for consideration. Already the ABC Education Department publishes material that may assist parents in taking a more active role in relation to *Playschool* and *Kindergarten**. Future efforts may require the production of further supplementary resource packages for parents. Alternatively, a more aggressive advertising campaign might inform parents of existing resources and of ways to purchase them.

* Some of the ABC Education Department publications produced for *Playschool* and *Kindergarten* over the past few years include LP records and cassettes of songs from *Playschool* and *Kindergarten* (e.g. Hey Diddle Diddle, Hickory Dickory, Humpty Dumpty); *Playschool* program notes and schedules; *Playschool* posters; and The Useful Book, consisting of songs and ideas from *Playschool* and *Kindergarten.*

(ii) The apparent differing roles for parents in their preschoolers' use of *Playschool* and *Kindergarten* points to the need to look at the differences between the two broadcast mediums as well as differences between the two programs themselves. For example, does a preschool program transmitted through the radio medium require a higher degree of parent involvement than television if it is to be successful? This survey supplies no definite answer to the question but certainly some respondents regarded the two mediums differently. Some of the negative comments on *Kindergarten* tended to reflect more on the radio medium than on the program itself. Parents differentiated between the attractiveness of the visual image in comparison with the auditory one. The way in which the two media are regarded by users is important and should be taken into consideration when *Playschool* and *Kindergarten* are compared on any of the aspects encompassed by the survey.

PARENTS' USE OF *ABOUT CHILDREN*

The results of the survey show that *About Children*, a program designed for parents of young children, was the least used of the three early education programs. This is despite the finding that parents were raising relatively young families. In general, there was also a lukewarm reception concerning the programs helpfulness, although there were some parents who qualified their opinion with the comment that they had found the program interesting but not always helpful. Only a minority, however, took efforts to actually praise the program.

Guidelines for Review

In examining the above findings on *About Children* the survey indicates several areas which the Committee may wish to consider:

(i) Many of the factors applying to the radio program *Kindergarten* also apply to *About Children*. These factors have been discussed already and need only to be listed here: the lack of knowledge of *About Children* (by about one-half of respondents); the need to advertise the programs existence and its supplementary resources*; the unsuitability of the broadcast times (for about one-sixth of *About Children* listeners); and the nature of the radio medium especially in the way it is regarded and used by respondents.

(ii) As well as the above, the survey also reveals areas for discussion on the content of the program. One of the more interesting is the thematic format of *About Children*. Generally, one theme is chosen for the week's talks, and each day the speaker develops a different aspect of that theme. Since parents' use of *About Children* tends to be infrequent and irregular, the development of themes which continue daily throughout the broadcast week may have limited usefulness.
Apart from this aspect, the survey also offers content feedback to the Committee by reporting respondents most desired topics for discussion as well as suggestions for improving the programs.

* One current publication available is *More About Children*, a selection of talks from the daily radio series *About Children*.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The aim of this summary has been to outline briefly the results of the evaluation and to offer guidelines which may be helpful in the on-going review of ABC early education broadcasts. Guidelines were presented in three major areas: Children's use of *Playschool* and *Kindergarten*; the role of parents in children's use of these two programs; and also parents' use of the radio program *About Children*. This section adds a final dimension for consideration – guidelines for future research activity.

A tantalising aspect of any research project is the number of further questions that are generated. Some of these questions have been raised already under the appropriate heading. However, there are other questions that may be asked and these are outlined as follows:

(i) Use of other television and radio programs
The questionnaire used in the survey was necessarily brief and didn't afford a comparison of ABC early education broadcasts with other programs on radio and television. For example, how do the ABC programs compare with other productions catering for the same audience? How does their use fit into the overall utilisation pattern of radio and television?

(ii) The quality of the educational experience
While some data related to how parents felt the programs had benefited their children, the survey concentrated more on degree of use than degree of educational worth. For example: How beneficial are the programs to children's learning? What segments work the best? What learning processes are at work? It is doubtful that the survey method by itself could facilitate judgments in this area.

(iii) Social interaction within the media setting
The survey touched on areas of interest surrounding the role of parents and siblings in preschoolers' use of *Playschool* and *Kindergarten* – What is the exact nature of this social interaction and what form does it take? How important is the social milieu? It is likely that insights into this area would be more likely obtained through the use of appropriate observational techniques.

(iv) The effects of isolation on use
In focusing solely on the Preschool Correspondence situation, no immediate comparisons are available between the utilisation patterns of isolated and non-isolated families. On the one hand it can be argued that ABC radio and television probably have a more prominent place in the lives of isolated people than in the lives of those people who have greater media choice and more accessible alternative forms of entertainment. On the other hand, isolation (and distance) has its own inhibiting influences including lack of access to ABC programs and reduced capacity for word of mouth communication about television and radio programs. What are the effects, if any, of isolation on the use of ABC early education broadcasts? Are there differences between the ways isolated and non-isolated communities use radio and television?

(v) The effects of the correspondence situation
Similar to isolation, no immediate comparisons are available between correspondence and non-correspondence settings, especially in regard to parent data. On the one hand it can be argued that Preschool Correspondence parents direct contact with their children's schooling

may produce a greater awareness and interest in educational issues than that produced in parents who send their children to preschool centres and primary schools. On the other hand, the busy nature of the correspondence situation (especially with other correspondence children in the family) may inhibit parents' involvement in one of those educational activities – ABC early education broadcasts. What are the effects, if any, of the correspondence situation on the use of, and participation in, ABC early education broadcasts? Are there differences between the ways in which correspondence and non-correspondence families use radio and television for educational purposes?

It can be seen that the present survey raises several further questions about the nature and role of ABC broadcasting in the early education field. These questions take us a little way from the present survey, but they may certainly be regarded as its logical extension. Notwithstanding these potential areas for future investigation, it is hoped that the results outlined in the present report will help illuminate issues associated with ABC early education broadcasts, especially as they affect distance education, and in particular, the Preschool Correspondence situation.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

ABC EARLY EDUCATION BROADCASTS

SURVEY OF PARENTS OR SUPERVISORS OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN THE QUEENSLAND PRESCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

General answering instructions:

1. This questionnaire would best be answered by the person who supervises the preschool child enrolled in the State Preschool Correspondence Program.

2. There are two sections to the questionnaire: Part A and Part B.

   If you or your preschool child have watched or listened to any of the ABC Early Education Broadcasts *Playschool, Kindergarten* or *About Children* during 1981, please answer both sections: Part A and Part B.

   If you or your preschool child haven't watched or listened to the above three programs during 1981, please answer Part A ONLY.

3. It is important that all questionnaires be returned by Friday, 4 December 1981.

   All questionnaires should be returned to:

   Preschool Correspondence Unit
   GPO Box 1317
   Brisbane, Q 4001

   For your convenience, please use the enclosed reply paid envelope.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

Office Use

Cols 1–4 ☐☐☐☐

PART A (EVERYONE TO ANSWER)

1. (a) Have you or your Preschool Correspondence child watched the ABC TV program *Playschool* at all during 1981?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 0 — 5

(b) Have you or your Preschool Correspondence child listened to the ABC radio program *Kindergarten* at all during 1981?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 0 — 6

(c) Have you listened to the ABC radio program *About Children* at all during 1981?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 0 — 7

2. (a) If you answered No to any of the above questions, could you give the main reason for not having watched or listened to each program?

	Col 8 *Playschool* (TV) (tick one)	Col 9 *Kindergarten* (R) (tick one)	Col 10 *About Children* (R) (tick one)	
				8
We don't have access to a set				9 1
We can't receive the ABC station				2
We didn't know about the program				3 10
Another reason				4
Not applicable				5

(b) If you answered 'another reason' in Q2 (a), could you give more details?

Playschool _____ 11

Kindergarten _____ 12

About Children _____ 13

3. (a) Apart from your Preschool Correspondence child, how many children are in your family? (Complete the information below)

	Number of Children	
Pre-primary school age children (not including your preschool child)	☐	14
Children in primary school, Years 1–2	☐	15
Children in primary school, Years 3–4	☐	16
Children in Year 5 and above	☐	17

(b) How many of these children are reasonably regular *Playschool* watchers?

	Number of Children	
Pre-primary school age children (not including your preschool child)		18
Children in primary school, Years 1–2		19
Children in primary school, Years 3–4		20
Children in Year 5 and above		21

(c) How many of these children are reasonably regular *Kindergarten* listeners?

	Number of Children	
Pre-primary school age children (not including your preschool child)		22
Children in primary school, Years 1–2		23
Children in primary school, Years 3–4		24
Children in Year 5 and above		25

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF QUESTIONS 1 (a), 1 (b), or 1 (c), PLEASE ANSWER PART B (Qs 4–14)

IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO ALL THREE QUESTIONS 1 (a), 1 (b), and 1 (c), PLEASE STOP HERE AND RETURN QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

PART B

PLEASE ANSWER THIS SECTION IF YOU OR YOUR PRESCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE CHILD HAVE WATCHED OR LISTENED TO ANY OF THE THREE ABC PROGRAMS DURING 1981

4. (a) How often does your Preschool Correspondence child usually watch *Playschool* or listen to *Kindergarten*? 26

	Col 26 *Playschool* (TV) (tick one)	Col 27 *Kindergarten* (R) (tick one)	
Every day			1
3–4 days a week			2
1–2 days a week			3
About once per fortnight			4
Less than once per fortnight			5
Less than once per month			6
Not applicable			7

27

Comment (if you wish) _____ 28

(b) How often do you usually watch *Playschool* or listen to *Kindergarten* and *About Children*?

	Col 29 *Playschool* (TV) (tick one)	Col 30 *Kindergarten* (R) (tick one)	Col 31 *About Children* (R) (tick one)		
Every day				1	29
3–4 days a week				2	30
1–2 days a week				3	
About once per fortnight				4	31
Less than once per fortnight				5	
Less than once per month				6	
Not applicable				7	

Comment (if you wish) _____ 32

5. How long does any one program usually hold your preschool child's attention?

	Col 33 *Playschool* (TV) (tick one)	Col 34 *Kindergarten* (R) (tick one)		
All of the program			1	33
About three quarters			2	
About one half			3	34
About one quarter			4	
Less than one quarter			5	
Not applicable			6	

Comment (if you wish) _____ 35

6. (a) How often does your preschool child usually join in when asked to by the presenters (e.g. singing along, doing the actions, etc.)?

	Col 36 *Playschool* (TV) (tick one)	Col 37 *Kindergarten* (R) (tick one)	
Always			1
Often			2
Sometimes			3
Rarely			4
Never			5
Not applicable			6

36

37

Comment (if you wish) _____ 38

(b) On the times that you watch *Playschool* or listen to *Kindergarten*, how often do you join in with your preschool child? (e.g. singing along, doing the actions, etc.)?

	Col 39 *Playschool* (TV) (tick one)	Col 40 *Kindergarten* (R) (tick one)	
Always			1
Often			2
Sometimes			3
Rarely			4
Never			5
Not applicable			6

39

40

Comment (if you wish) _____ 41

7. (a) What part of the program/s does your preschool child enjoy the most?

Playschool _____ 42

Kindergarten _____ 43

(b) Are there any parts of the program/s that your preschool child does not enjoy? If so, what parts?

Playschool _____ 44

Kindergarten _____ 45

8. How much does your preschool child usually enjoy the program/s?

	Col 46 *Playschool* (TV) (tick one)	Col 47 *Kindergarten* (R) (tick one)		
Enjoys it a lot			1	46
Enjoys it a little			2	47
Doesn't really enjoy it			3	
Not applicable			4	

Comment (if you wish) _____ 48

9. How did you first come to know about the program/s?

	Col 48 *Playschool* (TV) (tick one)	Col 50 *Kindergarten* (R) (tick one)		
I saw it in the program guide			1	49
A friend told me about it			2	50
The Preschool Correspondence School told me about it			3	
Other (Please specify) *Playschool* _____ *Kindergarten* _____			4	
Not applicable			5	

Comment (if you wish) _____ 51

10. (a) How suitable are the broadcast times of the program/s?

	Col 52 *Playschool* (TV) (tick one)	Col 53 *Kindergarten* (R) (tick one)	Col 54 *About Children* (R) (tick one)		
The broadcast time is about right				1	52 53
The broadcast time is unsuitable				2	
Not applicable				3	54

(b) If the broadcast times are unsuitable, would you give a preferred starting time (e.g. 1.30 p.m.)?

Playschool _____ 55–58

Kindergarten _____ 59–62

About Children _____ 63–66

Comment (if you wish) _____ 67

11. (For *Playschool* watchers) at what time does your preschool child usually watch *Playschool* each day? 68

Morning (9–9.30 a.m.)	☐	1
Afternoon (4–4.30 p.m.)	☐	2
Both morning and afternoon	☐	3
Morning plus also sometimes in the afternoon	☐	4
Afternoon plus also sometimes in the morning	☐	5
It varies (morning or afternoon)	☐	6

12. (a) (For *About Children* listeners) Does the radio program *About Children* help you to understand your preschool child better? 69

It helps a lot	☐	1
It helps a little	☐	2
It doesn't help at all	☐	3

Comment (if you wish) _____ 70

12. (b) (For *About Children* listeners) What topics would you like to hear discussed in future programs of *About Children*?

1. _____ your first choice 71

2. _____ your second choice 72

13. Do you have any suggestions for improving ABC Early Education Programs?

Playschool _____ 73

_____

Kindergarten _____ 74

_____

About Children _____ 75

_____

14. Is there anything that you'd like to add?

_____ 78

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. IN DUE COURSE, A SUMMARY OF RESULTS WILL BE SENT TO YOU. MEANWHILE, PLEASE RETURN QUESTIONNAIRE IMMEDIATELY TO:

Preschool Correspondence School
GPO Box 1317
Brisbane, Q 4001

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE PLEASE USE THE ENCLOSED REPLY PAID ENVELOPE.

APPENDIX 2: ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM RESPONDENTS

2.1 DEGREE OF USE OF *PLAYSCHOOL* BY PRESCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE CHILDREN

Comments on responses to: 'How often does your Preschool Correspondence child usually watch *Playschool*?' (N = 114)

Thirty-five of the 114 comments (31 per cent) centred upon how Preschool Correspondence children had reacted very positively to the program. Most of these preschoolers had watched *Playschool* either *every day* or *3–4 days a week*. Some representative comments were as follows: 'They wouldn't miss *Playschool* for anything – a very good program.' '*Playschool* is excellent for all ages.' 'Michelle would not miss it for the world and wants to know why it is not on the week-end.' 'I think she has learnt a lot from *Playschool*.'

Twenty-one comments (18 per cent) were qualifications to the structured responses. High frequency viewers sometimes watched less frequently and low frequency viewers sometimes watched more frequently. Comments centred upon the varying access to television, intermittent television reception and the changeable weather: 'Depends on TV reception.' 'When we do have access.' 'Unless we are away somewhere.' 'Depends on weather etc.'

Forty comments (35 per cent) explained the response to the structured question. The explanations centred on difficulties with television reception and came from respondents whose Preschool Correspondence children were irregular viewers (about one-half of these comments came from respondents who answered *less than once per month*). Some representable comments are as follows: 'Our TV is so snowy that the children can't see.' 'The ABC isn't received clearly, otherwise the program would be watched more frequently.' 'He watches *Playschool* when the motor is running which means he sometimes misses out.' 'I have no TV. Only watch on holidays, would watch every day if available.'

Six comments (5 per cent) could be classed as a negative reaction to the program and came from respondents whose Preschool Correspondence children were irregular viewers: 'He watched at beginning of the year but quickly became bored.' 'She is not a TV watcher – rather play.'

Finally 12 comments (11 per cent) were idiosyncratic and were classified as *other*.

2.2 DEGREE OF USE OF *KINDERGARTEN* BY PRESCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE CHILDREN

Comments on responses to: 'How often does your Preschool Correspondence child usually listen to *Kindergarten*?' (N = 62)

Twenty of the 62 comments (32 per cent) indicated that respondents' Preschool Correspondence children lacked interest in and enthusiasm for listening to *Kindergarten* or were involved in some other activity while the program was broadcast. These comments came from those respondents whose children were not regular listeners. (About one-half of these comments concerned preschoolers who listened *less than once per month* or *never*). Some representative comments are as follows: 'Preschooler is an 'outside boy' and is helping on the farm.' 'Child is uninterested in listening to *Kindergarten*.' 'Children's enthusiasm varies hence does the number of days listened.' 'Children usually play outside at this time which I consider more beneficial to them.'

Fifteen comments (24 per cent) indicated that the use of *Kindergarten* by Preschool Correspondence children was conditional on whether or not they (parents) turned the radio on. These comments came from respondents whose Preschool Correspondence children's listening frequency varied from *3–4 days a week* to *less than once per month*. Some examples are as follows: 'I sometimes forget to turn *Kindergarten* on.' 'Only occasionally have radio on.' 'Whenever we happen to have the radio on.' 'If we remembered, we would listen more.'

Fourteen comments (23 per cent) indicated that parents were too busy with other activities or were not in a position to turn the program on. These comments were from respondents whose preschoolers' listening frequency varied from *3–4 days a week* to *less than once per month*. Some examples are as follows: 'We are not at home often while *Kindergarten* is on – but it is listened to when we are.' 'Timing of *Kindergarten* and *About Children* does not fit into our daily activities.' '*Kindergarten* on at wrong time.' 'Comes on when elder child is on School of the Air.'

Finally, thirteen comments (21 per cent) were idiosyncratic and classified as *other*.

2.3 PROGRAM ATTENTION SPAN OF PRESCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE CHILDREN

Comments on responses to: 'How long does any one program usually hold your preschool child's attention?'

Comments relating to Playschool (N = 59)

Twenty-seven of the 59 comments (46 per cent) came from respondents whose preschoolers usually watched *all of the program*. These comments were framed positively. For example: 'He doesn't move for the whole program.' 'Never leaves the set.' 'Joanne loves *Playschool* and is upset if she has to miss it.' '*Playschool* is varied enough to keep his attention right through the program.'

Eighteen comments (31 per cent) were qualifications to the ticked response. These were mainly from *all of the program* respondents. Some of the qualifications were: 'Depending on the theme of the program but mostly he will sit through the full program.' 'Depending on how often certain portions of the program have been repeated.' 'Occasionally, it's more of a daze than constant attention.' 'He sometimes stops watching because he wishes to make something (or do something) he's seen on the program.'

Seven comments (12 per cent) either compared the preschooler with their other children or referred to child developmental aspects. Most of these respondents had also ticked *all of the program*: 'All of the program for older child and maybe three-quarters for younger child of two and a half years.' 'As they grow older, the program holds longer concentration spans.'

The remaining seven comments (12 per cent) covered a variety of topics and may be placed in the *other* comments category.

Comments relating to Kindergarten (N = 28)

Five of the 28 comments (18 per cent) on *Kindergarten* were from respondents who ticked *all of the program* and were framed positively: 'Gets very absorbed in programs.' 'She looks forward to it.'

Six comments (21 per cent) were qualifications to either of the two responses *all of the program* or *about three-quarters*: 'This of course varies with the interest of the child in the particular theme of the program.' 'Some days they stay until about three or four minutes before its finished.'

Twelve comments (43 per cent) were mainly explanations as to why the respondent's preschooler did not usually listen to *all of the program*. For example: 'With radio tends to find it hard to relate to a voice.' 'My child's attention can't be distracted from *Playschool*, but the radio is a little more difficult for her to concentrate on.' 'I have tried to interest my child in listening but she is not interested.'

The remaining five comments (18 per cent) either compared their preschoolers with the other children or referred to child developmental aspects (in a similar fashion to the *Playschool* comments).

2.4 DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION BY PRESCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE CHILDREN

Comments on responses to: 'How often does your Preschool Correspondence child usually join in when asked to by the presenters?' (e.g. singing along, doing the actions).

Comments relating to Playschool (N = 37)

Eighteen of the 37 comments (49 per cent) expressed a reason why the Preschool Correspondence child had not joined in regularly (*often* or *always*). The most frequent comments described a reluctance on behalf of the child to join in for various reasons: 'He is satisfied just to sit and listen.' 'Enjoys watching but seldom takes active part.' 'Is more likely to join in when I'm not watching.'

Nine of the comments (24 per cent) were fairly positive and either described the type of participation or expressed praise for the program: 'Finds it enjoyable and amusing.' 'They know all the songs.' 'She loves watching the show so she can join in with the things they do.'

Five comments (14 per cent) centred upon the time when the child had joined in: 'This has only been the latter part of the year.' 'Only been joining in since 4 years old.'

The remaining five comments (14 per cent) fell into the *other* category.

Comments relating to Kindergarten (N = 15)

Six of the 15 comments (40 per cent) were about irregular participants who either had inhibitions or were reluctant to join in: 'Preschooler not the joining-in type.' 'Shy if others are about.'

Two comments (13 per cent) spoke of difficulties with understanding the program: 'The radio might be too fast for him to catch on.' 'Instructions are too fast.'

Two comments (13 per cent) centred on the stage in which preschooler joined in: 'My son used to join in more when 2 or 3 years old, than this year.' 'Used to be content with listening more than joining in.'

The remaining five comments (33 per cent) fell into the *other* category.

2.5 PARENTS DEGREE OF USE OF *PLAYSCHOOL*

Comments on responses to: 'How often do you usually watch *Playschool*?' (N = 118).

Seventy-two of the 118 *Playschool* comments (61 per cent) were qualifications indicating that parents or supervisors didn't always give *Playschool* their undivided attention when they watched it. These comments were made by both frequent and infrequent viewers. Some examples of these comments are as follows: 'I don't sit down and watch it. I'm usually working somewhere in the area of the TV.' 'I don't watch the whole program – doing chores – watch bits of it during the half hour.' 'I generally watch it in passing (while doing my housework).' 'I don't watch the complete program but comment on odd sections to child.'

Eleven comments (9 per cent) expressed positive points about the program and came from both frequent and infrequent viewers: 'I like it too, good ideas.' 'I find *Playschool* very good as it isn't jumping about, but continues the theme therefore teaching concentration.' 'I think they're very well done.'

Ten comments (8 per cent) came from infrequent viewers who explained that they had no access to TV or did not receive the ABC station: 'When we do have access.' 'TV unavailable unless away from home.'

Nine comments (8 per cent) also came from less frequent viewers who answered that they were either too busy or unavailable: 'Some days we don't find time or forget.' 'I work and do not watch the program.'

Six comments (5 per cent) qualified their structured response by stating that they sometimes watched *more* or sometimes watched *less*: 'Sometimes more if I'm in the house working.' 'At the start of the year we would watch and partake together. As the year progressed I would leave him to watch on his own more.'

Four comments (3 per cent) were on the negative or critical side: 'I'm not keen on repeats and the children do notice.' 'After three children all watching *Playschool* when preschoolers, I'm tired of it.'

Finally 12 comments (10 per cent) on *Playschool* were idiosyncratic and categorised as *other*.

2.6 PARENTS' DEGREE OF USE OF *KINDERGARTEN* AND *ABOUT CHILDREN*

Comments on responses to: 'How often do you listen to *Kindergarten* and *About Children*?' (N = 35 each).

The number and types of comments received on each of the two radio programs, *Kindergarten* and *About Children*, were very similar and are therefore reported together. Most topics were also similar to those received for *Playschool*. (N = 35 each)

Twelve *Kindergarten* comments and 13 *About Children* comments (36 per cent to total) emanated from less frequent listeners who answered that they were too busy or occupied with other concerns when the two radio programs were being broadcast: 'Time doesn't allow me to listen to the wireless much.' 'We have *School of the Air* when *Kindergarten* and *About Children* are on.' 'Only listen to radio when school is not on. So its not very often at all, over a year!'

Six *Kindergarten* comments and seven *About Children* comments (19 per cent of total) came from less frequent listeners and expressed a degree of nonchalance and lack of interest in the programs: 'It is a matter of remembering.' 'If the wireless is already on when the two radio programs are on, we'd hear it with interest.'

Two *Kindergarten* comments and six *About Children* comments (11 per cent of total) came from frequent listeners and expressed positive points about the programs: 'All helps to help preschool child.' 'I consider *About Children* a very worthwhile program and try to organise my time to listen to it.' 'Wireless is on in the kitchen all day – have learned a lot from *About Children* – most interesting.'

Five *Kindergarten* comments and four *About Children* comments (13 per cent of total) centred on respondents not always giving their undivided attention to the programs. (Similar to *Playschool* comments).

The remaining 15 (21 per cent of total) comments were categorised as *other*.

2.7 PARENTS' DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION

Comments on responses to: 'On the times that you watch *Playschool* or listen to *Kindergarten*, how often do you join in with your preschool child? (e.g. singing along, doing the actions).'

Comments relating to Playschool (N = 30)

Eleven of the 30 comments (37 per cent) amounted to brief descriptions of how the parent joined into the program: 'I encourage by doing the actions myself.' 'Usually sing from the kitchen.' 'If she doesn't know what to do, I do it and she copies.'

Eight comments (27 per cent) came from irregular participants who were usually too busy with other activities: 'Am usually too busy, will join in if I'm passing by and there is something on.' 'I'm teaching another pupil at the time.'

Eight comments (27 per cent) centred upon how preschoolers either encouraged parents to participate (five comments) or discouraged them (three comments): 'Michelle loves me to join in with her.' 'Sometimes I'm told not to join in.'

The remaining three comments (10 per cent) fell into the *other* category.

Comments relating to Kindergarten (N = 17)

Five of the 17 comments (30 per cent) were descriptions of how the parent joined in: 'I sing songs with the child at impromptu times during the day.' 'Even though I join in songs etc., my preschooler doesn't join in with me always – he is very self-conscious.' 'Only if he seemed interested or wants to know how something moves.'

Five comments (30 per cent) came from irregular participants who were usually busy doing other things: 'Busy watching children and daughter.' 'I am not always near the radio to join in.'

The remaining five comments (29 per cent) fell into the *other* category.

2.8 ENJOYMENT OF *PLAYSCHOOL* AND *KINDERGARTEN*

Comments on responses to: 'How much does your preschool child usually enjoy the program/s?'

Comments relating to Playschool (N = 29)

Twenty-four of the 29 comments (83 per cent) on *Playschool* were written by those respondents whose children enjoyed *Playschool a lot*. Most comments were framed positively: 'She won't go anywhere while it is on.' 'Always looks forward to it.' 'She loves *Playschool* especially. Its a lovely program and the teachers in it are really lovely.' 'Loves it. Wouldn't miss it.' Only two of the 24 comments were qualifications. 'Enjoyed it more when younger.' 'Has been put off by older children dismissing it as babyish.'

Four comments (14 per cent) came from respondents who answered that their preschooler enjoyed *Playschool a little*. All four comments were elaborations of this opinion: 'Sees too much TV. All the rubbish that is on for hours and he just gets bored with the noise.' 'Does not hold her interest long enough.' 'Prefers Sesame Street.' 'Until this idea of turning it off and being tired of it came about, she has enjoyed it.'

The remaining comment was from a parent who answered that the preschooler *doesn't enjoy it*. The comment was: 'Up until 5 years old, he enjoyed it a lot.'

Comments relating to Kindergarten (N = 5)

Two of the five comments (40 per cent) originated from respondents who answered that their preschooler enjoyed *Kindergarten a lot*: 'Our preschool child says the program is not long enough.' 'Enjoys story session 7.15 a.m. on local station more.'

The remaining three comments (60 per cent) were written by respondents who answered that their preschooler enjoyed *Kindergarten a little*: 'He likes listening but doesn't care if he misses a program.' 'Preschooler really enjoys Kindy (not *Kindergarten*).' 'I feel my answer is unjust to your program as she has listened to it and enjoyed it since she was 2, however, she now enjoys the other school programs more.'

Comments relating to both programs (N = 14)

Ten of these 14 comments (71 per cent) compared the two programs. Eight of them expanded on the response that the child enjoyed *Playschool a lot* and *Kindergarten a little:* 'Kindy a little less than *Playschool*.' 'Just not interested in radio after taking in morning TV.' 'Prefers to see, instead of listening to radio.'

Two comments (14 per cent) came from parents who answered that their preschoolers enjoyed both programs *a lot*: 'Looks forward to programs.' 'The programs are very helpful to isolated children.'

Two comments (14 per cent) originated from parents whose children enjoyed both programs *a little*: 'Some things he thinks are silly because he thinks he is too old for that sort of thing.' 'I feel that both programs are too young for preschool children (5 year olds).'

2.9 HELPFULNESS OF *ABOUT CHILDREN*

Comments on responses to: 'Does the radio program *About Children* help you to understand your child better?' (N = 22)

Nine of the 22 comments (41 per cent) came from respondents who felt that the program had *helped a lot*. All comments were positive: 'Very interesting program if listened to – very educational.' 'Time could be longer.' 'Very informative – brief and to the point.' 'The programs I have heard have been very interesting.'

Eleven comments (50 per cent) came from respondents who thought *About Children* had *helped a little*. Four of these respondents found the program interesting or helpful. For example: 'I haven't been able to listen to many but found helpful what I did hear.' 'I find the program interesting.' Five of the 11 respondents also found the program interesting but with qualification. For example: 'It is always or usually interesting but not always relevant to my child.' 'Seem to concentrate more on very young children, but I always enjoy listening and did when my children were tiny.' Finally, the remaining two of the 11 comments were idiosyncratic, for example: 'We've got a lot to learn.'

Finally, the remaining two of the 11 comments were idiosyncratic, for example, 'We've got a lot to learn.'

Two comments (9 per cent) came from respondents who answered that *About Children doesn't help at all*. These comments were: 'I haven't made a point of listening to *About Children* until I received this survey'. 'General knowledge interest only.'

Finally, there were six comments which came from respondents who did not answer the structured question. One was: 'I like *About Children* and think a lot of the talks very interesting. I would like to listen to it more and probably will once we get 240 power.'

2.16 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Comments received on: 'Is there anything that you'd like to add?'

Twenty-five of the 206 comments (12 per cent) were general statements of satisfaction with the programs and congratulations to the ABC for producing them: 'Just thanks for what you are doing for us out here.' 'I think that the ABC programs for children are excellent.' 'Congratulations to all concerned, – the presentations are very acceptable.'

One hundred and twelve comments (54 per cent) were related especially to *Playschool*. Parents spoke of it in general terms as being an excellent program and also referred to specific aspects of the program. These aspects included the wide variety of happenings on the show, the well liked presenters, the educational nature of the programs, the superiority of *Playschool* to *Sesame Street*, and the great entertainment value provided for children. 'Congratulations to the *Playschool* team on a job well done.' 'I think *Playschool* is very good and helped my child to tell the time and express himself more.' 'I hope *Playschool* goes on for years as I think its great for children because they cover so many areas.' 'She also watches *Sesame Street* but does not like it as well.' 'The visual effects of *Playschool* are very good and all the people who present it are excellent.'

Thirteen comments (6 per cent) expressed appreciation for the two radio programs *Kindergarten* (10) and *About Children* (3). '*Kindergarten* is a wonderful program for preschoolers and I would like something similar for a brief bit of relaxation and enjoyment around p.m.' 'The new *Kindergarten* is a vast improvement on the old one, conducted by a woman on her own.' 'I enjoy listening to *About Children* as we live in a very isolated area and it helps me a lot.'

Three comments from parents (1 per cent) stated that their preschooler also liked other children's shows as well as *Playschool*, namely, *Sesame Street* (2), and *Fat Cat and Friends* (1).

Three comments (1 per cent) expressed regret about their problems with television or radio reception.

Four comments (2 per cent) reiterated how they had been too busy with other activities to use the programs more frequently.

Twenty-four comments (12 per cent) were criticisms related to various aspects surrounding early education broadcasts. These comments included the lack of knowledge of the radio programs (10), the interruptions of the programs by sports broadcasts (4), a criticism of television as a medium (2), and criticism of specific incidents of program content (4).

Finally the remaining 22 comments (11 per cent) were categorised as miscellaneous *other*.

APPENDIX 3: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING ABC EARLY EDUCATION BROADCASTS

This appendix contains examples of responses to the question: 'Do you have any suggestions for improving ABC early education programs?' A summary of these suggestions were presented in Tables 20, 21, and 22. For convenience, the responses have been categorised under the same heading as that presented in the tables. Examples are given only for categories (and subcategories) which account for at least two responses. (N = 2)

3.1 SOME EXAMPLES OF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING *PLAYSCHOOL* (refer Table 20)

Positive comments (rather than suggestions) (N = 83): 'Don't change format or timeslots. It is terrific as is.' 'I can't fault it – please don't change or lose that magic that comes through.' 'I think that this is the best children's show on TV and would be hard to improve.' 'This program is of a very high standard and is most enjoyable for even myself and husband.'

More activities for children (N = 13): 'Could more simple craft activities be shown.' 'Perhaps showing the little ones how to make some sense of the toys they use like cubby house, cart etc.' 'Could be more activities such as cutting out and more toys.' 'Perhaps encourage the viewer to make more things.' 'More art and craft.'

More educational content (N = 11): 'More of the alphabet on *Playschool*.' 'It would be nice to see a little more teaching as Simon learns quite a lot of things from the show.' 'I would suggest the use of numbers and letters be introduced.' 'Some old fashioned 'good manners' rules relating to health, manners and library books etc. Also some counting. Preschool requires up to 10 forwards and backwards.'

More 'on location' programs (N = 6): 'More on location programs i.e., parks, preschool centres, hospitals, etc.' 'If possible more in different places than studio to cover the community or the home.' 'Perhaps a little more interest in such things as zoos and outdoor activities.' 'Programs visiting hospitals and everyday places to be shown more frequently.'

More about other people's lifestyles and customs (N = 4): 'Inclusion of customs of some of our immigrant families.' '. . . maybe showing city lifestyles would help as country children don't see that often.'

More comedy (N = 3): 'Give us the muppets or some comedy along with stories.' 'How about more clown acts and mimes.'

More simple experiments (N = 2): 'I would like to see more simple experiments done.'

Suggestions for presenters (N = 8): 'They could act more natural. It seems overdone at times.' 'Less acting and more reality.' 'Perhaps diction could be slower, especially in songs.' 'Please have actors give a little more time for children to respond to questions directed to them. My own girls don't answer very often as they say there's not enough time and nobody's listening.' 'The pronunciation of some words is too Americanised.' 'More attention to selection of presenters.' 'Do away with men in this program. I have always tried to impress on my daughter a strong father and male image – I feel this show makes them look foolish and weak to say the least. Haven't they got any pride or respect in themselves?' 'More urging for joining in.'

Less program repeats (N = 9): 'Less repeats please. My son knows most of the programs off by heart.' 'I think it is an excellent program – there should more of these episodes – how many repeats have I seen? Why not more original material?'

A longer program (N = 8): 'It could go for a little longer, like an hour instead of half an hour.' 'I think if it went for a half an hour longer it would improve it.'

Better liaison with Preschool Correspondence program (N = 4): 'Could be more integrated with Preschool Correspondence course (or vice versa).' 'It would be helpful to have a program like *Playschool* which covered the same material as the preschool program at the same time as we had to do it.'

More supplementary publications (N = 3): 'A handbook made available on written request as parent could make things available for better participation.' 'I would like to see more booklets etc. published with songs, ideas and rhymes. The 'Useful Book' is hard to obtain.'

Produce a second preschool TV program (N = 2): 'Still keep, but add a preschool form of Magic Bag.' 'I think *Playschool* is very well presented for 2- to 4-year-olds. Perhaps a special program for 5-year-olds could be added.'

3.2 SOME EXAMPLES OF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING *KINDERGARTEN* (refer Table 21)

Positive comments (N = 13): 'Great as it is.' 'The programs I have heard seem very good to me.' 'The program is set out well as the present moment.' 'The program is okay as it is.'

Critical comments (N = 6): 'It is hard for kids to join in where they can't see the people.' 'Our preschooler feels that this program and much of its contents is too young.' 'My child likes cassette shoes but somehow *Kindergarten* cannot hold her interest.'

Slow down pace and style (N = 6): 'It seems to me it could be too fast and boisterous and the children can't really keep up well.' 'The program is too short and too quick; the children sometimes find it difficult to follow.' 'Very good – but sometimes I feel it is a little rushed.'

A longer program (N = 3): 'Could be about ten minutes longer.' 'Make the program longer.'

3.3 SOME EXAMPLES OF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING *ABOUT CHILDREN* (refer Table 22)

Positive comments (rather than suggestions) (N = 10): 'The program is most suitable as it is.' 'Interesting and informative.' 'Excellent.'

Critical comments (rather than suggestions) (N = 2): 'No suggestions for improving, but not many of the programs interest me.' 'I feel a lot of the talks are very basic and are what we know already.'

Engage guests with experience (N = 2): 'Programs by practica' people rather than theorists.' 'Need discussion or interviews with people who have had personal experience with subject (e.g. mother of a handicapped child).'

Advertise the program more (N = 2): 'More publicity to advertise its existence.' '. . . advertise the topics in advance.'

60693—S. R. Hampson, Government Printer, Queensland